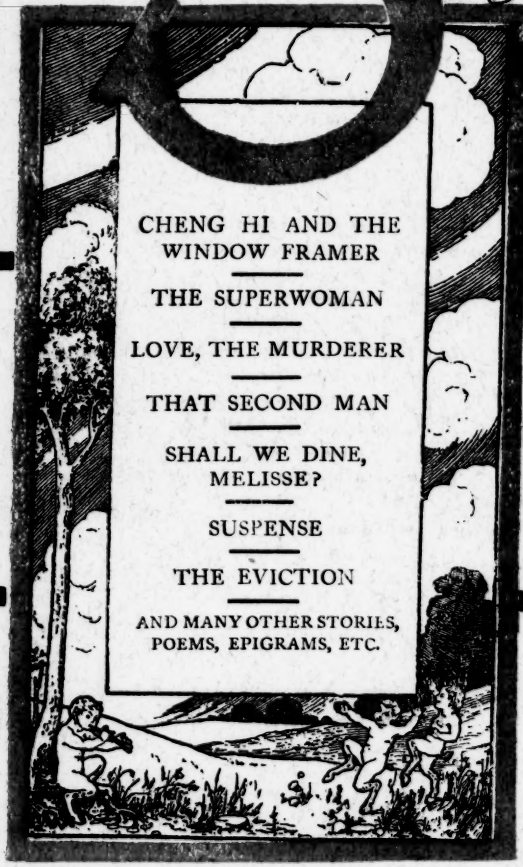
THE SMART SET

A Magazine of Cleverness

To Amuse, Not to Instruct



CHENG HI AND THE WINDOW FRAMER

THE SUPERWOMAN

LOVE, THE MURDERER

THAT SECOND MAN

SHALL WE DINE, MELISSE?

SUSPENSE

THE EVICTION

AND MANY OTHER STORIES, POEMS, EPIGRAMS, ETC.

NOVEMBER 1919

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THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF CLEVERNESS

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Editor—J. W. MILNE

NOVEMBER, 1919

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A STUDY IN IMPERTINENCE

By

H. DENNIS BRADLEY.

FOR a time sheer impudence is amusing, then it becomes tiresome, even vulgar.

And the Government has become vulgar. "Economise! Economise!" it impudently cries, and every Bureaucrat chuckles under his breath.

"Produce! Produce!" shrills the Bureaucratic chorus, "in order that we may enjoy rare and refreshing fruits."

"You are only providing us with a niggardly 2½ millions a day, and an ideal bureaucracy cannot be run in style on less than 4½ millions."

"It is a shell-shocked world" scolds the Minister of Metaphors. "It is a *shell-out*-shocked world," retorts the indignant Taxpayer.

* * * *

It is, of course, obvious even to the intelligence of he Chancellor of the Exchequer that the workers must keep the drones. The unproductive can only thrive at the expense of the productive. Hence the advice to you to work and to save. Bureaucrats are expensive animals to keep. In commercial and business circles if a man earns £5,000 a year and spends £10,000 he is coarsely dubbed a thief, and eventually pays the penalty of obtaining money by false pretences. But your Bureaucrat in precisely similar position talks of patriotism and duty and censors criticism by bleating vaguely of Bolshevism.

It is rapidly becoming the duty of the patriotic citizen to live in demobilized hutments and live on rationed nuts. Should he at any time feel bored he may feed on the thoughts of the bureaucratic hotels, caviare and champagne.

* * * *

The revolt will probably come when the Income Tax is 19s. 7d. in the pound, leaving the Taxpayer the odd 5d. with which to purchase a banana—the fruit of the Stranded.

Then new tribunals will be established, composed entirely of producers. They will demand answers on oath to simple questions. "Are you constructive of anything but restrictions?" "Do you produce anything politically but mixed metaphors?" "Are you an asset or a liability?" "If a liability, whom are doing?"

If found a liability the wretched being should be conscripted at once for productive purposes, and the vision of a corpulent bureaucrat enriching the fields with more or less honest sweat would add to the much needed gaiety of the nation.

* * * * * *

It is so dull to be always right. One loses the charm of the uncertainty of life. Sad to relate, over two years ago I was guilty of this forecast.

Evening Standard. April, 1917.

"*At the present moment it is not too much to say that every business man stands aghast at a Bureaucracy conducting the business of the country in a manner which would bring any ordinary commercial enterprise to bankruptcy within a week.*"

I wrote a long series of articles on the financial position, but they were unheeded except by the few who called me unpatriotic or pro-German.

Life even in war time is occasionally amusing.

* * * * *

Apropos of clothes, if Governmental expenditure is not reduced by two millions a day in the immediate future, the following prices must necessarily be doubled. Lounge suits from £10 10s. Dinner Suits from £14 14s. Overcoats from £10 10s. Riding Breeches from £5 15s. 6d.

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SCREEN JOTTINGS

The British film-producing industry will receive a remarkable impetus during the next few months. I hear that at least three big companies, Stoll's, the Alliance, and Broadwest, will make a serious bid for foreign and colonial markets.

The first named, with Sir Oswald Stoll at its head, has already produced many excellent pictures at their temporary studios at Kew, one of the latest being "Mr. Wu," with Matheson Lang in the name part. In this production one of the scenes, representing a street in China, was the largest scene hitherto constructed in this country. We are getting on!

Just a word about what the big companies propose to do. The Stoll Film Co. have acquired a large estate near London, and Mr. George King, the general manager, told me the other day that when their new and extensive studios are completed, they will be equal to any American studio.

Mr. Jeffrey Bernerd, the managing director of the company, is in America, and will bring back with him the pick of the Yankee producers. He has also paid a visit to Los Angeles, the hub of the American film-producing world, to pick up a few hints, and we may confidently expect big things from this firm in the near future.

The Alliance Film Corporation has a capital of a million pounds, and has taken Harrow Weald Park and its fifty-four acres. Mr. C. F. Higham, one of the directors, tells me they mean to make the place a second Los Angeles, and hope to start "taking" in real earnest early in the New Year.

For the second time Mr. Maurice Elvey has filmed the Prince of Wales. The first occasion was in "The Victory Leaders," when the Prince posed for the camera. The second time, however, is not the present Prince, but his famous forerunner, George, the Prince Regent in 1793.

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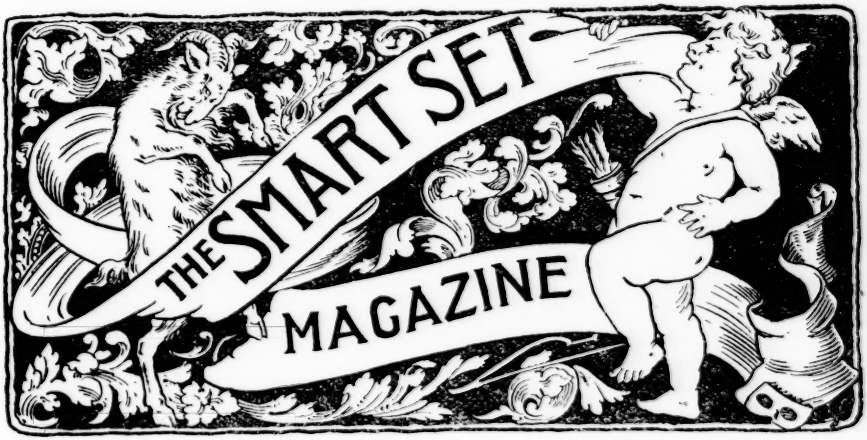

PORTENT

By George O'Neil

SO still the hour was and the sky so grey,
It almost seemed that there could never be
Again a green and blue and golden day
When wind would curl the silver from the sea.

The birds went out in silent wheeling flocks . . .
We watched the wonder on the water wrought
By curtain mist; and by the far blurred rocks
We saw a grey ship that the calm had caught.

Only a high great crow flapping its wings
Startled the stillness of the sultry air
And vanished . . . and we spoke of trifling things
To break a silence that we could not bear.

My fingers moved, scarcely touching your hand;
And yet we did not stir to end the spell,
For something that we could not understand
Tolled in a dolorous and distant bell. . . .

CHENG HI AND THE WINDOW FRAMER

By Lord Dunsany

ONE evening not far on in the Season of Fading of Willows, Hsu He and Peng Yuen went together to the garden of Cheng Hi and found him in contemplation of the beauty of the moon. And, having made little reverence, they asked of him each a question. And Hsu He asked him why he did not earn money, many silver pieces cut quite square, with a little hole in a corner that they might be worn on a string.

And Cheng Hi bowed upon receipt of the question, and wrinkled his forehead and gave thought to it.

Peng Yuen said:

"O Cheng Hi, without doubt thy garden is suitable, and honourable is thy contemplation of the beauty of the moon, but more suitable the ways of those that speak with the elders discussing the sugar crop and the way of the ships from Ching."

And Cheng Hi bowed and gave thought with greater vehemence to the question of Peng Yuen than even he had to the question asked by Hsu He.

And when no answer came for the space of an hour, both Hsu He and Peng Yuen bowed only once and withdrew. Then Cheng Hi rose and accompanied them.

And as all three made mutual protestation each of his own unworthiness to be in the company of the others, a custom that has been meet for three thousand years: Time has passed over it and found no flaw in the custom; even as each in his turn and without interruption of others made his own unworthiness the theme of his eloquence, they came to the house of the builders, and beheld the window-framers at work on a window.

And when Cheng Hi perceived that this man would make a window he stopped and addressed him thus (Hsu He and Peng Yuen listened):

"O worker in the evening, not thus does a man make broomsticks. But to make a broomstick a man having gone to the valley, and cut a willow in the season of willows, and seeing its shape is fair and having lopped its length to the length that a broomstick should be, which is exactly the height of a woman stooping, he rounds it and smooths it with a knife whose handle is ivory, and this he continues to do till the stick is round and seemly, smooth and white and pleasant, in itself an edification; lo then a broomstick."

And the man worked on at the window and made no answer, for he said in his heart:

"This man is evidently a sage and therefore undoubtedly mad."

But Hsu He and Peng Yuen murmured one to another:

"One work for one man, for another man other work. This is the parable of Cheng Hi."

LOVE, THE MURDERER

(A COMPLETE NOVELETTE)

By G. Vere Tyler

CHAPTER I

MR. MARVIN BRODERICK had the sort of personality that is distinctly felt, almost as a physical emanation. There was something remote, superior, even majestic about him. Down to the age of thirty-two he was never known to have exhibited the slightest sign of vulgar emotion. If he rejoiced at all, during those gay years, he rejoiced *pianissimo* and without outward symbol. If he hated, feared, hoped, repined, despaired, exulted or envied, it was done down in its deepest recesses and beneath the curtain of a mask-like and impenetrable manner. Well-to-do, charming, ruddily British, and anything but disagreeable in aspect, he had even managed to avoid falling in love.

In the presence of this Mr. Marvin Broderick, say, at his place near London, one felt, somehow, that a mind enormously well-oiled and wary, a brain incessantly alert and competent, had a firm grip upon the last, least tremor, vibration or weakness of his somewhat massive and assertively healthy body. His one desire in life, it was obvious, was to let nothing run away from him—to keep the reins firmly in his hands, whatever the assault of the seductions that surround so singularly ingratiating a young man.

To this end, because he delighted in the play of ideas and was apt to read intemperately, he laid out hours for that indulgence. Knowing that he was very fond of roast beef, he allowed it to be served to him but twice a week. Conscious—it having been rather conclusively revealed to him in his dealings with dogs, horses and servants—of a stealthily choleric temper, he kept watch over it with all the grim assiduity of a sentinel on duty. He seemed irrevocably bent, in fact, upon accomplishing the pleasing feat of being under all circumstances a man of complete self-control, of being without stint a mildly mannered man.

This kind of gentle life, of well-tempered reasoning, was placidly flattering to the *amour propré* of Mr. Broderick, but the real fact was that since his august arrival at the age of discretion there had been very little to ruffle him, or to make him other than the soberly contemplative, mildly mannered man he had elected to become.

Complete success at self-control, coupled with almost complete indifference to one's neighbour, is apt, of course, to make a man appear more than soberly contemplative and mildly mannered; in fact, it may not be going too far to say that it sometimes makes him seem downright dull. Dull, if that word be used in the sense of unresponsive, insensible to outside influences, inactive, stolid, is, in all probability, the term that the casual observer, more especially should the casual observer be an American, would have applied to Mr. Broderick. As a matter of fact, however, he was not dull, but deep, deep as a well. He was so busy thinking and keeping himself well in hand for his own delectation that—granting they be accepted as the gauge of a man's brilliance—he had no time for words.

He cared so little, in truth, about his neighbour, and so much about himself, that it irritated him to be called upon to make conversation, as to expend that kind of sympathy so strongly decried by his quiet friend, Friedrich Nietzsche, with whom he spent many hours. He preferred to be stupid concerning what surrounded him, what pertained to others, and peculiarly alert to what pertained to himself. What did pertain to himself was sufficient for him.

Two thoughts occupied him chiefly: how not to be taken advantage of, and how, if need be, to take advantage. He had long since decided that man was a thinking animal and that a thinking animal must accept anything, swallow any medicine, if by so doing an advantage may accrue to the thinking animal. He was a product, no doubt, of hundreds of years of that kind of thinking on the part of his ancestors. It was so natural that he was scarcely conscious of it. The "hot-headed" American he regarded as a prattling child, but he kept in mind the Biblical warning that out of the mouths of babes come words of wisdom.

He had an undefined way of making one uncomfortable, but this was not intentional. He cared nothing about one's comfort. He was not unkindly disposed, but indifferent. One might have ideals, dreams, purposes. What he asked was simply not to be bothered with that sort of thing. All that he demanded was that one refrain from flaunting one's self in his presence, or trying to push him to the wall. Should a chance acquaintance persist, dare to persist in this, and should he be so unfortunate as to prove able to carry his aim, Mr. Broderick had stored away kitchen utensils that he was not ashamed to throw.

So consoling was all that he found latent, or expressed, in his own personality, that he respected a stranger in proportion to that stranger's ability to control himself as he did, and to protect himself as he did from the onslaughts and attacks of a troublesome and designing world. But he never feared anyone. In his mind one might be, and that quite calmly, ignored; on the other hand, it lay within the possibilities that one might be used.

CHAPTER II

HAVING reviewed, and let it be hoped not too relentlessly, Mr. Broderick mentally, let us review his physical mode of existence for almost any evening of almost any year.

At eight-thirty—had we not better say nearer on to nine?—he had just dined. The table, however, had not yet been entirely cleared away. Some silver and glass remained on it; the wine decanters, solid old remnants of outlived generations, had their accustomed place. Mr. Broderick scarcely touched wine, but the butler would as soon have laid the table without the cloth as without the wine glasses and the old bottles.

It was a part of Mr. Broderick's life to see those wine bottles and the gold and crimson liquids they contained. They were in keeping with the purple silk hangings over the windows, and the faded tapestries; they were a part of the high-backed hand-carved chairs and the massive table with lions' paws well planted on the carpet; they were a part of the cut glass and silver flower-holder, that was three feet high and that was always, winter and summer, filled with flowers that grew in the garden or conservatory and never anywhere else.

The room was as large and as deep as a good-sized hall. It had been magnificent, and many gay scenes had been enacted within its walls. But the gay people were long since dead—and tapestries and silks and rugs fade with the centuries. And so, where once all was magnificence and splendour, now it was time-mellowed and dimmed. The atmosphere, however, suited Mr. Broderick. There was pathos in both—the young old man, and the old, old place patiently housing youth.

Mr. Broderick, being so sufficient

unto himself, had very few acquaintances, and only one who could lay claim to being called his friend. Nothing could possibly mark a sharper contrast than these two. As Mr. Broderick was grave, serious, inclined to moroseness even, his friend, Hal Everett by name, was joyous, buoyant, full of rampant hope and good spirits. Deep down in his heart, way back in his head, Mr. Broderick loved his friend Hal Everett. Hal Everett, in the front as well as the back of his head, loved Mr. Broderick.

To prove in what high esteem Mr. Broderick held his friend they sometimes had arguments. By far the most fiery one they ever had preceded what Mr. Broderick considered Everett's erratic and disgraceful departure for America some six years before. While on his subsequent visits to England, their friendship continued, or at least appeared to continue on the same lines, Mr. Broderick did not feel quite the same. He was, in fact, more true to the past than to the present.

Just now Mr. Everett was on his yearly visit home, and their intimacy was, in its way, resumed. They rode horseback, played golf and tennis and went shooting, and occasionally attended the theatre. Also when Mr. Broderick had occasion to go to town, he sometimes visited Mr. Everett at his home, which concession, however, he made under protest. One of the reasons for this protest was that Hal's father, a delightful, slightly dyspeptic, highly immoral young old gentleman, had during a visit to his son, in America, brought back with him a rich, but, in the eyes of Mr. Broderick, wholly impossible American wife. This lady, as witnessed by Mr. Broderick's own eyes, not only openly flaunted an ardent admirer, but flirted with every male who came her way, including her son-in-law. She even found it possible to make eyes at the butler taking her plate, and to be coy with the footman opening the door.

Such a person, in spite of Hal's reiteration that it was all innocent, and due entirely to a kind heart—that she was only trying to please and make everybody feel happy—was so wholly displeasing to Mr. Broderick that he preferred his friend, meaning Hal, to dust his hands of his own, to his thinking, pernicious home, and come to his. And as a rule this was what Everett did.

On a certain afternoon the two were having their tea, or rather had done so, in the garden, a beautiful spot that, as the sun descended, began to grow solemn. The flowers and things about them seemed napping, almost falling asleep. A moist, quiet night was on its way, a night with no promise of stars.

Finally Mr. Everett remarked: "I have come out with a confession, Marvy."

"Confessions are for sinners, Hal."

A restrained but indulgent smile crossed Mr. Broderick's grave features—his wonderful smile, in fact, that briefly illumined his face and instantly disappeared.

"Oh! I'm a sinner," pursued Mr. Everett. "I've long since gloried in that, but the confession is that the sinner is at last caught."

"Caught."

Mr. Broderick raised his heavy eyebrows.

"Irrevocably."

"At what?"

"Nothing." Mr. Everett laughed. "I'm in love."

"Oh!"

"You don't believe me?"

"I believe you."

"This one is different."

"They all are."

"But this one," Mr. Everett laughed again—nervously now, "is differently different. Do you believe it?"

"No, of course not."

"You remember, though, what I always told you I would do when I fell in love, really in love, don't you?"

"You have confided to me a good many plans, Hal."

"I told you when I really fell in love I would marry and settle down for good and all in England."

"I believe you did."

"My next trip to America will be to settle up there and put the resolve into action."

Mr. Broderick was silent.

"She's an American girl," announced Mr. Everett defiantly.

"Then you *are* caught, old chap, hopelessly."

"I want you to meet her!" burst forth Mr. Everett.

"I suppose I shall have to." Then, after a pause: "You don't want me to travel three thousand miles to meet the lady of your choice, do you?"

"It wouldn't be too far!"

"A wealthy widow, the kind your father imported?"

"No. She is a penniless girl, or, rather, I might say, a penniless angel!"

"Born in America?"

"Born in America!"

"How very interesting."

"You will admit that she is!"

"I shall be pleased for your sake, if possible, to do so."

"I want you to meet her to-morrow evening at dinner."

"You haven't gone crazy, Hal, have you?"

"No. She is in London. She is visiting my father's wife!"

"That kind?"

"No, not that kind, although in spite of some surface affronts, the mater is not a bad sort. She happens to be a distant relative of the girl I'm engaged to. They are all doing things over there, the girls, you know, and this one, my own especial one, is an interior decorator. She delights in making ugly things, by simply changing them around, beautiful."

Mr. Broderick, not being sufficiently impressed by this to reply, his friend went on somewhat eagerly:

"And there is where the mater comes in so gloriously. She paid all her expenses over to give her the chance of studying our homes!"

"Excellent!"

"And she *is* studying! Her enthusiasm is wonderful."

"I don't doubt it! But I say, dear old soul, you aren't really bent upon inflicting that enthusiasm on me, are you?"

"She will win you over, take you off your feet!"

"But I don't want to be taken off my feet! Standing on them has become a very satisfying habit."

Mr. Everett got up. He had come in on horseback and was attractive to look at in his riding clothes, one of those slender, fair-haired, blue-eyed men that make such charming pictures for forest or ballroom. An extremely pleasing-looking, remarkably handsome fellow was Mr. Hal Everett.

"You'll come to dinner to-morrow evening, won't you?" he asked.

"Why, of course, Hal. I've always performed that little sacrifice for you. Only I warn you if your mater begins to make eyes at me, or attempts to lead me away to the conservatory, I shall without hesitation make my escape."

"I'll have my stepmother's eyes properly bandaged and the conservatory locked!"

As Mr. Everett walked off to mount his horse Mr. Broderick fell to rather serious thinking of his friend. In making the statement that he had no faith in his stability he had not gone beyond the fact. His friend's temperamental machinery, those light-hearted, flighty inclinations, especially those that included affairs with women, he had no respect for, and this lack of respect had caused him to become a cynical observer of certain indulged enthusiams that in his mind could only be considered vulgar. Not only did Hal, and that unblushingly, disport himself in what Mr. Broderick deemed a disgraceful manner with the ladies, high and low, but since his sojourn in America, when the impulse seized him, he got gloriously drunk, and not only got drunk but remained so. It was quite in keeping with Mr. Broderick, in spite of his affection, not to be in sympathy with these things, things so far apart from him; and as the shadows deepened about his old place he entered the house,

a bit disgusted, a bit wearied of his friend, and certainly not in the least keen to meet the Everett fiancée—the penniless American angel.

CHAPTER III

NEVERTHELESS at eight-thirty the following evening, according to his promise, he was taking his seat at the Everett dinner table.

As usual there was a number of people assembled—a motley lot, mostly American—that Mr. Broderick did not see fit to meddle with beyond partaking of the same dishes.

He had heard Mrs. Everett, Sr., called fashionable, and that, he supposed, whatever its value, she certainly was. A blonde in her early thirties, quite pretty in her way, she at moments looked sickly, weak and wearied, while at others she appeared alert, vivacious, like a precocious child intent on centring attention on its nonsense. If Mr. Broderick, as he frankly could not, did not admire Mrs. Everett, it was equally impossible not to observe her.

As usual, he bestowed upon her certain glances, that she forced, as a matter of politeness. Then while the soup plates were being removed by two orderly footmen, he turned his attention upon his fellow diners. Beside her husband, himself and Hal, and two long-faced, sallow English girls, sisters, for some reason invariably present, there was on hand the usual variegated American coterie, the most conspicuous, the most unblushingly advanced by her, as the most important, being Dr. Ralph Herbert of New York, and now, since the marriage of Hal's father, living in London. He practised, or was supposed to practise, his profession, chiefly upon the elder Mr. Everett, but his real occupation appeared to be to look spic and span, and to pay very marked attentions to his hostess.

Leading off on this particular evening, from Dr. Herbert — the long-faced, sallow girls wedged in somewhere—leading off in the direction of Mr. Broderick, there was a very tall, pallid man who cut people up at every turn, an Englishman; then came a red-cheeked, golf-playing young woman, also English, who gushed one moment and when she had you became nasty, and opposite Mr. Broderick sat a large, rotund, bald-headed American, with a pretty wife who wore orchids. By her side was Hal's fiancée, the girl he had come to meet.

Usually, people encountered by Mr. Broderick made little more impression upon him, once away from them, than sheep grazing on a hillside after his train had sped by. But these people, so vividly taken in by the young gentleman, were not to be so easily dismissed; they were part of an environment through which his first conscious want was to be registered—they were, in a way, the highly decorated frame in which that first want was set. That want, though it was scarcely, of course, so instantly recognized, was, as has no doubt been devised, a great desire to have friendly converse, and at great length, with his friend Hal's penniless American angel.

From the moment Mr. Broderick's eyes fell upon her, he became sharply conscious, and that for the first time, of a need in his life to be supplied, a requirement. Apart from the fact that some of the people about her had legs that were too long, bodies too fat, faces elongated or chubby, she was well set off. There was Hal's father, quite a classic as to appearance, his wife with her sickly beauty, the doctor with luminous eyes, and, always at his best in evening clothes, Hal.

Mr. Broderick took in all this, all these people making a picture for his mind to revert to, and then passed on quite deliberately, in the full consciousness of registering a situation, to the background, the wall if you will, on which his framed first want hung.

His hostess affected, except on the table where electric lights and candles glowed under pink shades — little fringed things, pretty enough—a lightless dining-room. She had even, in accordance with the then prevalent idea,

gone so far as to paper the walls in black, refusing them the relief of pictures, so that one seated at her table might have, with a stretch of fancy, imagined himself dining in mid-air on a very black night.

This somewhat fantastic manner of dining had on occasion proved irritating to Mr. Broderick, who went so far as to call it grotesquely silly. But tonight it met with his approval. To be seated exactly opposite his first want, his first want so distinctly being the young American of Hal's selection, in just this kind of a black magic atmosphere, was to him—nor could he just say why—highly satisfying. There was something suggestive of disaster in his suddenly awakened interest. And there was no doubt in Mr. Broderick's mind as to this interest, this awakening. It consoled him, however, that on certain occasions, though in a greatly lesser degree, he had felt similar interests. Similar awakenings without, of course—and therein lay the calamity—the accompanying suggestion of any idea of want. Such things, such an interest, may have occurred, for instance, at some theatrical performance. But it had never failed to vanish once he found himself outside the door of the theatre. Mr. Broderick, to his surprise, now quite suddenly looked forward, now hoped for just this happening: that when he turned his face homeward all would be as before—that there would be no swift forgetting this time.

The girl was of medium size, unassuming, rather gentle looking than otherwise, with the peculiar brightness, however, of a wild bird that even in a cage suggests song and soaring. Her hair was the colour of strong coffee, her face oval, her skin waxlike and pale. Her eyes, which one instinctively sought, expressed no colour; they simply burned beneath a calm, contemplative brow. Her mouth had something of the firm contour of a boy's with the sweet wilfulness of a child's. But her pale, radiant loveliness—she had all that—was not what held Mr. Broderick; it was not her colouring that first captivated him, nor even her strange hair, her burning eyes, or the wistful lips. What really awakened him, and that so sharply, was the beauty of her hands.

Mr Broderick was fond of studying hands, finding out their meaning, the purposes of people through them. But, these hands, these new hands on the horizon of his vision, seemed destined, unless when his face was homeward turned he could shut it all out, to erase from his consideration all other hands. He had never, he frankly admitted, seen such hands. They suggested to him an almost spiritual mission. They seemed fraught with a message that, while apparently on his plate, held his eyes. Was it their strength, their gentleness, their beauty, or simply her own original way of using them, that held him? It was a question that he put to himself more than once at that table.

CHAPTER IV

DINNER over, the ladies, as precisely as altar boys, left the dining-room, and after a short while Mr. Broderick, with that freedom England grants her guests to do as they please, stepped from one of the French windows out upon the broad, solemn, railingless verandah in the rear of the house.

This verandah overlooked grounds reached by five or more shallow stone steps. To his amazement, while in the act of lighting his pipe, he saw, in a rather crouched-up attitude, the American girl, the penniless angel, in her modest brown dress, that at dinner had given her the look of a saint, seated on the first of the five or more steps.

Mr. Broderick had never seen a lady seated this way before, very much, as a matter of fact, like a gipsy, and for a moment the quick transition from the bizarre, the artificial of his hostess' table, to the quite natural—to which she responded in a way to him *not* natural—did much to restore him to his usual calm. If not in a taxi, a hansom, or even a tube, those transporting vehicles so conducive to his mental res-

toration, he was figuratively at least, outside the theatre doors. Approaching, for him almost impulsively, he inquired if he might not get her a chair.

Her elbows were on her knees, her chin in the palms of her hands, which position she seemed to find too satisfying to change. With an upward glance that reached him at best through the corner of one eye, supported, as it were, on the tips of the lovely fingers, she answered: "No," and added, "we always sit on the steps moonlight nights at home!"

She changed her position now and stretched out her hands, the same hands he had found so mysteriously appealing.

"Isn't it *beautiful* to-night?" she asked.

"More so than usual?" inquired Mr. Broderick.

"Isn't it?" she persisted. "It seems to *me* more beautiful than any I have ever seen, more beautiful than any night that ever dawned upon the world! But then," she laughed, "I am always thinking that about nights; they *are* so fascinating!"

"How?"

She laughed again.

"There isn't any way of telling *how!* It's just that they are, and all different. I have never seen two nights alike. Have you?"

"I had fancied them all more or less alike."

"In a way, yes, of course, but so are people. If you study them—nights I mean—they are all different, just as people are. Why, I've seen deformed nights! Won't you sit down?"

Mr. Broderick looked at her in a calm surprise. Did she really suppose he would squat down there beside her in the manner of the couples one fought shy of in the parks? He said to her very quietly that he had rather not.

"But why not? We aren't strangers, not even the strangers that you think we are. I know you very well, indeed!"

"Yes?"

"If you will sit down I'll tell you just how well I do know you! Perhaps you are surprised to find me out here, but I can't stand that after-dinner hour when all the women sit alone and talk —will you pardon this?—such silly things, and yawn and get so bored. We never do that in America; why do they do it here?"

"It has always been the custom."

"Custom," she echoed, "I hate that word!"

She laughed again, and the tones rang out on the night like a shower of golden bells.

Mr. Broderick thought he had never heard such a pure, joyous sound.

Silence fell between them and after a while she exclaimed again: "Won't you sit down?"

"I prefer to stand, thank you."

"Englishmen *are* so funny," she teased, looking up at him.

"How?"

"Oh! I can answer *that* how! Do you know what an American would have done, almost any American, in these circumstances? First, he would have *asked* if he could sit down beside me, and done so before I could answer; then, he would have talked over all he had been doing all day, asked me a hundred questions about how I liked England, paid me several compliments, and ever so many things that you haven't done. Oh! you *do* take things seriously!" Her face grew a bit stern. "It seems so strange to me, and sad, too. You see, you have so much and are so grave and serious, while in Virginia—I come from Virginia, you know, —we have so little and are so gay. You know—never mind what people think!—we have not even yet recovered from the Civil War. We have our old homes, but they are in pretty bad plight. You don't know how these grand old places in perfect preservation, beautifully furnished with such splendid comfort and so many well-trained servants, impress an American. All the combined money of the millionaires of America couldn't buy the same thing over there—it's impossible!"

"Then you prefer England to America!"

"Oh, no! I didn't say that, but I appreciate it almost to an absurd point, I believe. I am filled with wonder at the magnitude and grandeur. It overpowers me at times. The very soil seems to speak to me, and the trees—oh! England's trees!—and it's so cumbersome in its magnificence, so grandly dull, so sullen, so quiet, so unresponsive, so cruelly still, so beautiful, so overpowering, so unrelenting, so passively insolent, so superiorly stupid, like the great who don't have to talk. It's—oh, it is so magnificent!—but," her voice broke, "America is America!"

A little laugh escaped in a sob.

"For the present though," she went on, "I am under the spell of England. It has hypnotized me, I believe. It responds to something my nature has always craved, but never actually found. It's the composure I find here, possibly, and—what shall I say?—the unexpressed insolence, perhaps. England defies the world in such a masterly fashion, and I like that! And the flowers—oh! I think the angels keep vigil over the flowers in England, else how *could* they be so beautiful? It seems to me we haven't so many flowers at home, and"—she paused reflectively, "I wonder if they are as beautiful! I will make another confession to you. I hate the inroad of Americans in England, just as I would hate for an army to make its barracks in Westminster Abbey. Americans seem to me so unsuited to England, so unsuitable. I almost wish we could be debarred. I hate the incongruous! But you must not think I ever could love any place as I do America. I couldn't, and for reasons—well—that I know!"

"What are those reasons?" Mr. Broderick asked.

"Well, it's because, as they say of the plays, the heart interest. Loving all that is beautiful in England, I believe I would perish if I had to live here and were not looking forward to going home. You see, we *feel* things over there so, and we don't repress our feelings—we are natural, spontaneous, indifferent to conventionality, but wildly alive to experience; we are taught as little children to love each other, and to talk of that love and value it; families are so devoted. My grandmother used to tell me every night when I went to kiss her good-night, 'Love one another.' She used to whisper it in my ear, as though it were our secret. Don't you think it was sweet? It's that kind of thing. We live more intensely, more passionately, and"—a step fell on her ear and she glanced quickly over her shoulder—"it makes it sometimes, you know, all the harder to forgive. We do give so much! Here you seem always holding back what you really ought to give. I wonder," her head was tilted back, her eyes on his face, "if you understand?"

"Partly."

"I reckon you like it being that way."

"Oh, yes, I like England!"

She laughed again.

"Really," she asked, "won't you sit down?"

"No."

"Why?"

"I usually sit in a chair."

"But why not be unusual; there is something in that."

"Is there?"

He was studying her, not forgetting her hands, white as pearl, composed yet restless, moving aimlessly, briskly or languidly with her thoughts, used as one imagines a fairy princess might use a fan.

"When are you going to let me go through your house?" she asked.

"Go through my house?"

"Yes, Hal promised me that way over in America!"

"Hal is a reckless promiser."

"He is rather," she agreed, suddenly thoughtful.

"Why do you say that?"

"Because I know it."

She pondered and then quickly: "You *will* let me go over your house, won't you?—Hal and I? Do you know—" she paused.

"Yes?"

"It seems perfectly wonderful to me

for you to have that great big place all to yourself!"

"It has never seemed too large for me."

"Oh! That's because you are used to it! Hal tells me there are rooms and rooms nobody ever enters and that your big drawing-room is opened only once a year!"

"That is true."

"And you don't think it a sin?"

"Sin? A gentleman must have a habitation, I suppose."

"A habitation, yes, but—"

"Yes?"

"It seems to me it is a sin to have so many rooms that you never use. I'm crazy about rooms, you know. They throw me into spasms of delight. I see such possibilities in them."

"Possibilities?"

"I'm an interior decorator, you know."

"Hal told me."

"Did he? Well, my speciality is to take a room just as it is and by rearranging it turn it into something beautiful. I do with rooms, or I try to do, what writers do with thoughts. You know what *they* do—what Browning did with a thought merely through punctuation! When I am arranging a room I think of Browning, what he did with punctuation. I sometimes say to a chair, 'You are a period,' as to a little footstool, 'You are a comma.' My rugs are dashes, or even question marks!"

"I should think it would be rather trying and confusing."

"Oh, no; you may be surprised, but it isn't. There are difficulties, of course. Some rooms, the shape in itself, are difficult. That I grant you. There are difficult people, too, angular in shape, unresponsive, but I," she laughed, "generally bring them around."

"Do you?"

"The greatest thing in the world is to bring people and things around!"

She paused to think again, look this time, he thought, anxiously over her shoulder, and as she did so, as he concluded that she was watching and listening for Hal, a full moon escaped through some ragged clouds and shone full upon her.

Mr. Broderick was indebted to the moon. He stared down at her with the nearest approach to a feeling of rapture he had ever known. She was in his opinion an uncanny vision of loveliness, uncanny because of her position and the activity of her mind, which seemed to be given over to forming thoughts on all subjects, even the most trivial. It would not have surprised him, in spite of the fact of her extreme femininity, to hear her break into philosophy.

Mr. Broderick had made a discovery. He had run across a woman who looked beautiful and had an almost feverish tendency to use her mind. To be fair to him, he had in his studies of love—and love had been one of his principal studies—conceived of himself as one day falling a victim of the magic power that had in so many strange ways controlled the world. But while thus conceiving of himself as a victim, he had never imagined himself a captive. Love pure and simple he had dreamed of as an indulgence, at best. But that he was to find possible companionship accompanying it, that the woman who appealed to his senses would appeal, also, to his head, had never once, even in his wildest thoughts—and he had had wild thoughts about love—entered his head. He wondered, as she, the surprising object of his consideration, sat demure and sweet, infinitely sweet, bathed in moonlight, what she would say next.

What he felt, and that most distinctly, was that, more especially if he preferred to lead her on, she could be clever, and by being clever he meant she could throw a new light on things, a new light that would make them more worth while.

He felt, in fact, that here was a being, for some inexplicable reason a luminous being, of whom, given the opportunity, he would never tire. He would never tire, he felt, even though he had to remain standing above her in just this strange way. His mind travelled to his own granite verandah, a hun-

dred times bigger than this one, leading to grounds ten hundred times bigger, on which she, rather small and crouched up as in the present moment, would become completely lost to him. Following this was the desire, a strange disturbing one, to bend down, take her two hands in his and keep them quiet, keep them quiet by pressing them madly to his lips.

With this thought Mr. Broderick turned abruptly, so abruptly as almost to appear rude, and entered the house by the window through which he had escaped it. Inside the dining room, now emptied of people and table service, scintillating strangely from sidelights in pretty sprays ejecting from the black walls, Mr. Broderick faced the fact that his first want had him in a sharp grip—faced, indeed, the fact that he was in love, and that the girl he was in love with was engaged to be married to his best friend.

It was not difficult for him, with billiard balls clicking in his ears, and the occasional sound of a feminine voice coming his way, to stand quite fifteen minutes in deep thought, and this he did.

The vision of Mr. Broderick, himself in black, of course, the central figure of walls shooting forth fantastic flames, was not an idle one merely for the eye. There was much more to engage one—although for the eye, too, he was anything but disappointing, for he carried well his six feet one of massive strength, with a serious face crowned by very beautiful dark hair, handsome enough for any purpose, or any woman. But Mr. Broderick himself came to no conclusion. So failing, he did what would seem most natural; he joined the gentlemen at billiards, as, however, an onlooker only.

Among other things he was an onlooker of the numerous brandies and sodas partaken of within the short space of an hour by his boyishly handsome, fair-haired friend, Hal.

The vision of the girl on the verandah seated in the moonlight—as he well knew waiting for Hal, and this very Hal moving about the brilliantly lit-up billiard room knocking balls and drinking brandy—served, while he stood looking on, as food for peculiarly disquieting thought.

Mr. Broderick was surprised, as he kept his place along the wall, his standing place, for he was, it seemed, in no mood for chairs, to find himself so given over to thoughts of others, thoughts that did not, *must* not, in fact, include him. He saw quite plainly that his thoughts of the evening could *not* include him, that of necessity he was on the outside, and there must remain.

He found himself desiring to get away, and with that infallible habit of serving his inclinations, he took, finally, his departure, making no adieu.

CHAPTER V

Mr. Broderick was to discover that even greater changes had taken place within him than he had imagined. He was actually—the absurdity of it was to dawn upon him so gradually as to be only recognized later—seeing through other eyes than his own.

This he discovered after his jolt home in a hansom, when he found himself on the front stoop of his home. It was here that he discovered how lasting were his impressions of the evening, here that the tremor of familiar moonlight on the growth of ivy covering an old elm tree became new moonlight, here that he discovered the immense value of moonlight as a thing of beauty, and to the creation of scenes that had much to do with, as he had been informed, making all nights different. Recalling far-away impressions, he could understand how it was possible for a night, provided one part were so shaded, to appear deformed. That remark, among others equally unimportant, if not silly, clung in Mr. Broderick's mind like insects caught in a spider's web. There was no escaping them, as there was no way of freeing them.

He turned suddenly indoors and mounted the broad mahogany staircase,

where the armour of knights of old stood on the landings and swords of long-perished warriors hung on the walls.

He entered his bedroom, solemn in the reflection of a solitary light shining through a dull red globe upon which dragons of gold did combat, and here attacked by new thoughts, he stood in a kind of trance.

Below the house was being darkened and shut up for the night. The tread of the servants was silent, but he heard the grating of the old lock and the rattle of a chain as the front door was barred. In the moment Mr. Broderick himself resembled a warrior in the solitude of a lonely old prison. He walked over and extinguished the solitary, solemn light. And then he took his stand before a window and looked out on a scene fully flooded in moonlight.

Could a night as sweet as this one be anywhere else in all the world? Or was it that he had been informed that such a night had never been? Was he thinking or recalling? Was he actually seeing, or was a vision being presented to him? Whichever it was, never before had a night out of its pure beauty so attacked his nerve centres.

With lowered chin and lids wide apart, he continued to peer out upon a scene which was growing, or so it seemed to him, every moment stronger in splendour. The very heavens hung, in his mind, caressingly low; the moon bathed the tops of the trees or dripped through and between the leaves to the ground, there to lie like a shining liquid. Statuary gleamed white and deathlike among the trees; the dry, sunken fountain seemed to drink anew of invisible waters; a lake lay quivering and palpitating in the distance; and further away on the side of a hill the innocent sheep were sleeping.

Suddenly the warrior in Mr. Broderick awoke. As he had felt called upon to stand guard over his first want, he felt called upon to stand guard over England, stand guard to maintain this calm, passionate, passionless splendour, this restful serenity, this inactivity that allowed things to come into existence, live and die in tranquillity, like the old elm tree in the yard. In the moment it might be said that Mr. Broderick *was* England with his breast bared, his arms open to America, America being the girl crouched on the top step of the five leading to the ground, the girl with the heart bursting with love, her brain full of active dreams.

The foliage stirred, a bird awoke, chirped, and was still again. How reverently, tenderly sweet he again thought it all was! Suddenly he knew, with a certain sense of gratitude, that he had never before—for so does love transform one—seen things, as he now saw them, or thought such thoughts as now filled him. The place and all it contained he had always regarded in the light of a valued possession, a jewel, that one is more satisfied to possess than to wear. And, as though he himself had framed the thought, his mind once more turned upon his friend Hal, who might become the possessor of a jewel that he would perhaps, in time of course, neglect, even ignore. As he had no faith in his friend's stability, he believed that he had trifled too long in love to find it valuable, as anything more than a pleasing pastime. It did not seem to Mr. Broderick that this was the kind of love to satisfy a girl, at any rate this girl, who, it seemed, had been reared to place much greater store upon that commodity, if so love could be called.

There awoke within him a tremendous dissatisfaction with his friend, such a dissatisfaction that, as his eyes fell once more upon the scene outside, the scene of such exaggerated loveliness, he thought of him as a deserter. This hunting up of an offence was rather painful to Mr. Broderick, for he had loved and did still love Mr. Everett. As though this were a part of the duty of his life, this love for his friend, he was overcome with a sense of sorrowful yearning.

Perhaps Mr. Broderick felt, or meant, that while he could and already had forgiven Mr. Everett whatever of

wrong Mr. Everett had done himself, or him, through his departure from the golden, beaten track of duty, he never could forgive him any departure, anything that he had done, or might do, to the girl. A very exquisite feeling accompanied this reasoning. He must, he being so big, so self-contained and strong, look out, even though she was Hal's, for the girl. Just how, or in what way, certainly never in the moment occurred to him.

Like the warrior wearied as well as driven, he turned slowly, reluctantly, from the window overlooking so much and went to bed, where the habit of a healthy young animal being pleasurably fixed, he was soon asleep.

In falling asleep there was a certain feeling of intoxication, the intoxication of stirred senses with no fear of disturbing dreams. His life had been free of stains; he had borne existence without complaint, and with patience he had borne the heavy burden of dignity that his birth had placed upon his shoulders —borne day in and day out the loneliness and monotony of a dreary life, borne it with such reverential patience as to be half conscious of it.

It requires tremendous strength to be inactive, and up to the present moment Mr. Broderick felt himself called upon to have that strength. The girl must be protected—but how?

CHAPTER VI

THERE is nothing like the dawning of a fresh, clear, healthy morning for putting one, especially if one be a fresh, clear, healthy young man, into a normal frame of mind.

Refreshed from his tub, in a rather elaborate bathrobe of blue and orange —and with his early tea in hand, Mr. Broderick, with one move of his other hand, his left, politely—he felt the duty of politeness—waved away the evening before.

When he was dressed and outside for the brisk walk he usually indulged in before breakfast, he felt almost amused at himself for what he called a rather silly dinner away from home, and for his later romantic ramblings. The strength of the young day often does for people just what this morning did for Mr. Broderick. But the morning's strength may not be relied upon as enduring. No sooner was Mr. Broderick seated before his breakfast of Yarmouth bloater, eggs, bacon, toast and tea, than in a flash the whole evening before was on him again as though it had never been interrupted by the dominating and wholly callous strength of the early day. It was no longer morning at all, but evening, the evening before, and when Mr. Broderick attempted to eat his breakfast he almost felt that he was — so insistent were his memories—partaking of his dinner. It was confusing; nor was the confusion pleasant. It was a confusion that before the meal was over had left him, for the first time, wondering what he was to do.

He was pleased upon taking up his paper to have his memory refreshed to the fact that this bright, clear day, the day upon which he was to be lonely, was the one set apart for certain Olympic games to be followed by a race, an American horse coming in for prominent notice. Mr. Broderick decided to attend the games, and see the race.

At noon he was one of a long line purchasing tickets and a little later he was in his seat. The games had already begun and he gave himself up— Mr. Broderick was fond of games—to watching two evenly matched wrestlers, followed by other contestants equally deserving of interest. He saw slender youths, fleet of foot and lithe of body, dash across the shining turf, fly, as it were, to the top of a pole, and spring safely over the beam to the ground below. He saw divers mount carefully the spiral staircase to the platform elevated to a great height, take position, stand poised, and drop headlong into the water below. He saw them come up, shake their matted locks and swim safely to the shore. He saw them turn somersaults—one, two, forwards and backwards—and make no mistakes and

experience no accidents. He felt proud of them. They were Englishmen, practised in their art and fearless. He watched them saunter up and down in their bathrobes, undisturbed while awaiting their turns. They were, these strong fellows, heroes in his eyes. He was quite absorbed.

But the great event of the day was yet to come. For, turning his eyes from the grounds to cast a glance about him, who should Mr. Broderick discover seated beside him, on his left, but the young girl, the young American girl of the evening before, and, to his amazement, alone.

"Why," she exclaimed brightly, although his sharp glance noted that she turned pale, "what are *you* doing here?"

Said Mr. Broderick, who had flushed rather than paled: "I might put the question to you."

"Oh! mine is a very simple reason. I've been thinking of it for days!"

"Are you here alone?"

"Yes, I stole away, I didn't want anyone to come with me! You see—"

She looked at him.

"Yes?"

"There is an American horse to run!"

"I saw a notice of that."

"I know"—he thought how bright she was, like a diamond reflecting rays—"that horse! He and I are old friends. He was born in my neighbourhood. I knew him when he was a little colt. Isn't it wonderful for us both to be over here? I'm just crazy to see him and I didn't want anyone with me because I know I'm going to be awfully excited and—well, everybody doesn't understand!"

"Do you object to me?"

"No, now that you are here! It's delightful, I'm glad, only—"

"Yes?"

"When my horse comes out," she laughed, "if I jump over the railing you mustn't be surprised!"

"I am sure you would not do that!"

Mr. Broderick wished that his heart would not beat so, and, strange to say, his companion, who had had *her* thoughts and emotions, was indulging the same wish.

"Oh," she exclaimed, "when Potomac Boy appears I might do anything! Just think, I've given him many an apple; he has rubbed his nose in my hand; and now he is here to run a big race in England, and I am here to," she flashed a glance at him, "see him win!"

"I wouldn't be so sure of that."

"Oh! I *am* sure, *quite*. But," and she turned completely to offer him a far-away look from her eyes, "isn't life strange?"

"I have never thought so."

"No? Why, strange things happen every day!"

"Do they? Not to me."

"To you, only you don't observe them. You take everything for granted. Everything that happens is strange to me. For instance, just think of your being here to-day, and that we should, neither knowing a thing about it, get seats side by side! Isn't *that* strange?"

"Very. Where is Hal?"

She laughed. "He may be here for all I know! I told you that I stole away. He is betting on Elsie! May I tell you something?"

"Certainly!"

"I just *know* Potomac Boy is going to win, I feel it! And I am actually afraid, not *really*, you know, to be with Hal when he has a disappointment, because he can't stand anything not going his way—it puts him in a temper."

"I know that."

"But perhaps what you don't know is that on those," she was deadly pale now, "occasions, he drinks. Did you know that?"

He didn't answer.

"Did you?"

A bugle sounded at this moment, and as though they had sprung up out of the earth the horses appeared on the track. The girl was no longer awaiting an answer to her question. Her own life and all it might have in store for her was swallowed up in the present moment, the moment that was to afford a thrill, the *home* thrill, when Potomac Boy appeared in sight.

At last he did appear, and even at her great distance she knew him, if only by Uncle Sam's colours worn by the jockey. She was not the only American present, not by any means. There was quite a party of them, easily distinguished, not far off, and as the horse passed the stand, indifferently, to be viewed, the American cheering began, the girl joining in, laughing that laugh of hers that Mr. Broderick was beginning to wait for. Somehow to him it was like a light. So unaffected, natural, joyous was the sound that he felt he could see as well as hear it. The shouting, yelling, screaming, pounding and jumping up and down of her people was barbarous; it revolted him. She was different. She might do anything. There was a grace about her, gentle yet positive, that gave her licence, made whatever she did plausible.

The horses were in line. They were off. For the first time in his life Mr. Broderick's eyes were not on the horses; they were on her. She was as white as a snow image in bleak moonlight, and her eyes, like flaming torches, travelled with every step taken by Potomac Boy. She saw but one horse and as, with an easy spurt, he was ahead, her breath came quicker and finally big, unheeded tears rolled down her cheeks. Mr. Broderick's eyes fell first upon those tears and then upon her hands, those strangely virile, passionate hands, stripped by her of their gloves, on the appearance of "her" horse to be free to wave, to clap, or to do whatever impulse would suggest to them.

A burst of cheering told him that things were happening and he fixed his attention on the horses. Plain as day the race belonged to Potomac Boy; there was no question as to that until —the last second, when by the tip of a nose Elsie came in ahead.

"How is it?" she asked, turning, breathless. "Did he lose?"

"The English horse won," said Mr. Broderick calmly.

"But that's impossible!" she gasped. "He was ahead all the way."

"Anything is possible on a race track."

Mr. Broderick, not quite known to him, was reaching high tide at this moment, reaching a moment when first experiences were coming fast. He was not thinking of himself, his own pride, but of the feelings of another. The horse, "her" horse, in the last minute was jockeyed out of the climax, the finish. Potomac Boy's own rider had performed that rather wonderful trick. *She* did not know this, could not, and so she could only experience the sense of defeat. It didn't seem fair. At any rate, Mr. Broderick was not quite equal to her disappointment. Coupled with her ashen face with its lost, hurt look, it gripped too hard at his heart. With a complete and conscious surrender to his weakness, weakness that included his pride, he bent over her.

"Your horse *did* win," he said. "The jockey, at the last moment, twisted the curb and lost a second through the shock to the horse."

"Ah!" she gasped.

And all her revolt against treachery, any treachery, was written in her face.

Then the tears again, tears that were not crying, tears unaccompanied by a sound, just big hot tears that gushed to her eyes, drowned them and then rolled down her cheeks. He stood looking at her, fascinated by her dismay, as everything about her fascinated him. What he told her was the truth, it was no surmise, no suspicion. He knew it. But it was not in keeping with the part of Mr. Broderick, to whom advantage taken and held was the first law of nature, to admit it. It was a burst of generosity for her sake, the sake of another's feelings, another's comfort, and never before had Mr. Broderick experienced just such an enjoyable emotion.

As he gazed upon her countenance, a bit distorted by her emotions, he felt grateful to her; through her a wonderful feeling had been accorded him. It was as though a half-withered, gnarled old rosebush had suddenly burst into bloom. He felt like that and was surprised. Mr. Broderick did not know

before that in doing something for another a man could thus burst into bloom. It rather turned his head. He saw a new meaning to life through it, and wished he could repeat the experience, wished his life could be made up of small sacrifices, daily, hourly, for her sake, and that in some remarkable way all these sacrifices would become rolled into one, that he might on some grand occasion sacrifice his life for her.

Mr. Broderick was indeed, by now, very much in love.

Bending to her he said: "The excitement has tried you. Will you go somewhere with me for tea?"

CHAPTER VII

It should not be for a moment assumed that in extending the invitation Mr. Broderick was either bent upon currying favour or in any way disentangling the interest of the girl by his side from his friend, to whom—and this he was not able one instant to forget—she was engaged to be married. Mr. Broderick would have as soon thought of appearing at dinner in a cutaway coat as to curry favour, and up to the present moment it had not occurred to him that he might become justified in so disentangling the girl.

They were leaving—it was quite evident to him that for her the day was over—tea hour was approaching, and so what more natural, polite even, than the invitation, provided that no feeling whatever beyond what was natural and polite had been awakened in the mind and heart of Mr. Broderick?

With that quick transition from one emotion to another, that he could only liken to lightning in the sky, she accepted brightly—from his English standpoint—eagerly.

Thus it was that the fiancée and friend of Mr. Hal Everett, who at the present moment, having got news over the ticker, was celebrating the victory of his chosen horse, were travelling swiftly along in a taxi to some remote, remote in the sense of exclusive, place for tea.

Apart from the invitation, in itself an invitation, of courtesy, Mr. Broderick was not averse to a discussion of his friend that would of necessity include herself. Whatever pertained to her, even though it might prove painful, could not fail to, in his present frame of mind, interest him, and that to a point out of proportion to their relative positions.

The place selected by Mr. Broderick for their tea was hung in brown velvet, carpeted in brown, and the chairs had brown leather seats. It was not large; only a few persons were present, and these few persons, and all the soft, delightfully conceived browns, were lit up from the generous reflections of a large, old-fashioned chandelier made of very fine glass that hung low from the ceiling in the centre. There was nothing modern, no table lights to be, as Mr. Broderick thought, in the way. It was formally polite, almost touchingly serene, or, at any rate, so it seemed to the girl, and she could imagine no more fitting place in which to confide to the best friend of her fiancé certain things that had been recently troubling not only her mind but also her heart.

It was she who, when the order for what seemed to her a good many things for tea had been given, took, quite as though she knew he were waiting for her, the lead.

"I'm going, after what you told me, to forget all about Potomac Boy, only I hope he knows that he won. Do you think he does?"

"Oh! he knows."

"I wish I could have gone to his stable and comforted him, told him I knew, too! Wouldn't he have been glad? Do you think he would have recognized me?"

"I am sure of it." Mr. Broderick was quite fervent.

She was not half so surprised by his fervency as was Mr. Broderick himself. It almost decided him upon complete silence.

"It's awfully sweet of you to say that," she said.

Mr. Broderick could not imagine the

words "awfully sweet" as applied to anything he might say, but her manner of advancing an idea sufficed.

The tea was served; she confessed to hunger and for a few moments they were quite given over to the repast.

"I'm going," she said presently, looking up, "to talk to you about Hal."

"Yes?"

"You know how we met, don't you?"

"No, he never told me."

She paused a moment before taking up: "We have a very beautiful old home, Colonial, you know, in Virginia, but," she paused again, "we—are not very well off."

"And most Americans are?" he inquired, still remote when it came to conversation.

"Those who come here, for the better part *are*, but oh! no, it isn't so at home." She smiled as she added, "We have our poor!"

"Naturally," agreed Mr. Broderick, making an attempt not to watch her so, not look so hard at the face that held him.

"We have splendid hunting about our place, and during the season we take paying guests, gentlemen who want to come to the country to hunt—our house is so large, we can accommodate a good many—and really we don't mind, it brightens things up. We have things to talk about for the whole winter!"

He did not reply to this, and it rather embarrassed her, but she went on as it were making her way through a delicate flush.

"On one of these occasions someone brought Hal, and the moment I saw him I fell in love with him."

"Yes?"

"You see, I had never seen anyone like him. In fact, I had never met an Englishman. His manner, his speech, a new kind of speech to me, his voice, and intonation all for some reason charmed me; whenever he spoke it almost took my breath away! And"—she paused a moment—"you know how handsome he is, what a perfectly beautiful presence he has!"

"Yes, I know."

"Whenever he appeared—of course, it was foolish—I could only think of sunlight, and that sunlight after a little while blinded me. I think I very nearly went mad about him, and of course, not so quickly, he about me!"

"Love you!" interjected Mr. Broderick.

"Yes, of course, only—"

"Only?"

Mr. Broderick bent slightly forward.

"Only—you must not misunderstand, he is always beautifully tender with me, only," she repeated, "sometimes he seems to forget me."

"Forget you?"

"Well, not exactly that, but he leaves me, goes away for a day, two, three days, a week, and when he comes back I know—"

"Know what?"

"That he has been drinking!"

"Is that all he does?"

Mr. Broderick felt a change in his heart beats. He knew that he had forgotten himself.

"I don't know what he does," she answered simply.

A pause followed during which she picked up her gloves from a corner of the table and stroked them reflectively while he watched her hands, every movement of them as though jewels would drop from them, or flowers.

"May I tell you something strange?" she asked.

"Please do."

"To me Hal is two men, two distinct men, the one I knew there at home, before I knew, ever thought of his faults, and the one I know now. It is the first Hal, in spite of the fact that I am with the second one, that I think of most. The first Hal was a perfect man! I thought so! It's the most wonderful thing in the world to fall in love as I fell in love with him."

"Is it?"

"Even all the conditions were right! It was such a beautiful autumn. I'll always contend that the trees changed colour differently that year. Such a riot!" Her eyes closed only to open.

"Just a world of flaming yellow and red and gold and brown, with for days and days perfectly blue skies with white stationary clouds. And at night, moonlight—pure, unbroken, cold moonlight. That was the world he came to me in with his," her eyes closed again a moment, "wonderful presence, his glad voice, speaking—it seemed to me that way—a new language, and yet one I could understand, a new language that every time he spoke, even when talking over the day's sport with his friends, nearly took my breath away. I would stand on the outside of the door breathless, not to hear what they were talking about, but only for that thrill that went through me when he spoke. Really, you know, that kind of love is wonderful; it's a dream, a madness. Do you know what I have often wished?"

"What have you often wished?"

Mr. Broderick felt that his eyes must be held in check or flames would escape them.

"That I could have died before I knew the other Hal, died on the day he said good-bye to me to take the train for New York. Then I would have died perfectly happy. It was too *much* happiness! And I am always back to those days, those richly coloured days of blue skies, waiting for the sound of his voice, going to the top of the hill for the first sight of him returning with game, standing with him on the porch at night, a little cold—the nights were chilly—folded in his arms, different from anything in the world and sweeter! Oh!" and her eyes so rich in tears clouded over, "wouldn't it have been better to have died?"

"No!"

Mr. Broderick's voice was sharp.

"I often, often, think so! A good deal of me did die, and now," she smiled, "my hope is sick."

"Your hope of what?"

"That he can ever go back to being that first Hal! I know," she laughed now, "he never *was* that first Hal, that it was only that I saw him so. You must not think I don't love him now, I do, only I'm so afraid of all the suffering in store for me. It is because I do love him that I just fear it's all going to be a slow death with me."

She put out both hands across the table but withdrew them and held them in her lap.

"I've made up my mind to one thing!" she exclaimed.

"What is that?"

"Hal had arranged for our marriage when I first came over, but I put it off for six months to test him."

"Test him?"

"Yes, test him!" she repeated. "If in the course of the six months he ever abandons me again as he has done several times for days, a week, two, three weeks, without my hearing from him, I shall call it all off."

"Your engagement?"

"Yes."

"In truth?"

"Yes, and for one good reason!"

"What is that?"

"I will," a red veil seemed to cover her face, "have come to the conclusion that, with all that he means to me, coupled with his love, he isn't really worthy of me, isn't worthy of the life I have always been ready to lay down for him."

"Perhaps," said Mr. Broderick quietly, "no man could be."

"Oh, no, not at all! *He* could be—I'm not straight-laced—if, well," she laughed, "he only *would* be! I make all allowances for the fact that on sight of him I just made a man to suit all the requirements of my imagination. I allow for that, really I do, but, well, suppose we were married and he should disappear for days, or weeks, and not even communicate with me, and"—she broke off a moment but took up anxiously—"don't you see how, apart from how my heart would suffer, it would humiliate me beyond words, that my pride would be in the dust?"

Mr. Broderick thought deeply; he seemed to be going over something, a vast field, or the whole of a human life, before answering.

"He wouldn't have the right to do that; no man has a right to humiliate

another," he said finally. "I," he thought again, "look after the pride of my horses and my dogs."

"Then you must know how I feel about it," she rather burst forth.

"I didn't say that."

"I *wish* you did, though. I can't tell you, long before we met, you know, how I have longed to have this talk with you. I always felt somehow that when I had laid everything at the feet of your strength an answer would come."

"I may not be as strong as you think."

"Oh, you are strong, I know that. Hal was always telling me of your character, how you lived, everything about you, and he used to end up with 'the dear old rock.' That's," her hands went out again, "how you seem to me, a rock way out in the ocean, that, no matter how many storms dash over it, will just be there. I might," again her pretty laugh, "swim out to you some day! Do you know that, even with Potomac Boy being unfairly dealt by, and worrying a tiny bit about Hal, I've been very happy this day, more especially," she waved her beautiful hands, "since we came here! I'll never forget it!"

He did not reply, but the silence was very beautiful, so beautiful that she felt dreamy and gave herself up to looking about, looking about the place in which she had found happiness. To her surprise they were alone. The room seemed larger, much, and everything grown more pompous.

"It's so beautiful in here," she said, finding his eyes. "I love brown."

Mr. Broderick almost wondered if there were anything she did not love. She seemed to be *all* love. He thought of himself as the rock in mid-ocean, and had—a very ridiculous thing it seemed to him—a vision of Hal entering a bar.

"What I meant to say about Hal was," she took up presently as she smiled dryly, "that he must *prove* to me that he won't abandon me at intervals. I wouldn't like to *begin* to tell you what my sufferings have been already. And always he has been able to end those sufferings without even an explanation, only by returning. Just the first sight of him has been enough. And then, when his arms were about me—you don't *know* how I have loved—and his lips were on mine, I've forgotten everything, except that I *was* in his arms, that I had him back, and that's weakness. Years of that and I wouldn't have any character at all. One should hold on to character at any cost, I mean, even if love must go. Don't you think so?"

"I never thought of it."

"I have! And that's the awful thought, that Hal could rob me of my character, my self-respect! I'm trying to fight that!"

He didn't answer that and she burst forth, "I've told Hal that if during the test, during the six months, he ever goes away that way it will all be over between us. I mean that!"

Her eyes filled with tears and the beautiful hands flew up and covered them.

Mr. Broderick sat watching her a moment very intently. As the room had seemed to her to grow larger, she seemed to him to grow smaller, diminish, become quite a little thing. He noticed the simplicity of her, how inexpensive were the garments she wore, a being that not only needed all the fair treatment—Mr. Broderick did not go so far as tenderness—a man was capable of, but, also, worldly endowments, necessities, comforts, nay more, and, going very fast indeed, his mind travelled to his mother's jewel casket, well stocked with the belongings of mothers of several generations. And just as Mr. Broderick had, and in such an unwarranted way, had a vision of his friend Hal entering a barroom, he now had a vision of this girl in bridal array flashing in the jewels of that old box. All this unusual kind of thinking, Mr. Broderick felt, would not do, so he motioned to the waiter for his check with the hope of, as it were, restoring order.

To his surprise, as the waiter moved off she looked up and flashed him a

smile. Mr. Broderick thought again of lightning playing in the sky, but he thought it with a returning smile, the smile that all of Mr. Broderick's world waited for—and upon. This smile of Mr. Broderick's that seemed to have in it a gentle compassion for an ill-fated world, opened up a new one for the girl, a new life. It raised a beacon light upon the rock she had talked of swimming out to.

Once outside, he put her in a taxi quite formally, and without a shadow of the smile gave her number, raised his hat and walked away.

CHAPTER VIII

"STRANGE," mused Mr. Broderick as he walked off, "that we should both have seen him as sunlight," and, he continued thinking slowly, "that is just, perhaps, what he is. Certainly he is brilliant as sunlight is, equally uncertain, and unstable, and certainly he is given to disappearing."

This last, the fact that his friend was given to disappearing, seemed to be the objective from which all things concerning him radiated. This habit of disappearing, unique in its way, was by no means a new one; it was as old almost as Mr. Everett himself, and so, in no way to be laid to the girl. Nevertheless, it concerned the girl, concerned her vitally, to the point, in fact, of her life hanging upon these very disappearances. She had come, it would seem, to the point of not indulging, not standing for them, and that, the very fact that she might not, as she had said, *would* not stand for them, shot a hope in Mr. Broderick's heart quite staggering in its effect.

Until that hope, as it were, shivered his being, Mr. Broderick had no idea of having gone so far as to have ever dreamed of entertaining, as far as the girl was concerned, any hope at all. She had, and this had been recognized, passed out of his, for that matter any, hands, except, of course, Hal's, before he met her. The hope, however, the hope that had ventured and then staggered him, seemed to speak differently. Mr. Broderick, continuing his musings, believed finally that he knew, possibly, just how that hope had come to be born. A certain look of his had penetrated the girl, and not only penetrated but startled her. She was startled by the magnetic force of it. Not expecting any such thing, she had been powerless against it.

There was a world of meaning in this for the thoughtful Mr. Broderick. It told him—he had never doubted this in his thoughts—that when it came to him finally to deal with a woman—he had always known that he would some day deal with a woman and had saved himself for both an intense and a square deal—he could deal with her as he willed. He had that confidence in himself.

Mr. Broderick almost marvelled at how pleasant he felt, his pleasantness, as he knew, being the outcome of self-satisfaction. In other words, he felt equal to any test in the game of life, provided he cared to enter the arena and play the game. He had never exactly, while there had been flashes, felt quite this way because he had never felt aroused to visit the arena. It lay in the distance, a thing to be dreamed of, almost scorned—he saw such brutalities and failures there—approached only if he himself, quite apart from invitation, felt inspired.

That he did feel inspired, Mr. Broderick, with that habitual caution that had become a part of his life, did not even yet admit. What he did admit was that he had, as it were, become an onlooker of a game that interested him, that he was rather sickened by the tactics, unfair in the extreme—Mr. Broderick believed in fair play—of one, and sympathetic to the other so bent upon being strong against a dazzling and overwhelming opponent. The question that arose in his mind was whether or not he should warn the dazzling, overwhelming opponent, or simply look on and await developments. Waiting was not at all trying to Mr. Broderick. He had been waiting all his life, prepar-

ing for a given hour. While no man had loved less, few men of his age had given more thought and study to love. Love in Mr. Broderick's mind was so all-important, such a powerful factor in the making of the world and in the life of an individual, that it behoved a man to live in the thought of it, to study it as a science, a profession, before going into the practice of it.

There was little that either poet or sage had had to say on the subject that Mr. Broderick had not familiarized himself with. In fact, one whole side of his library from floor to ceiling contained not a single book from ancient to modern that did not expound this matter. He knew women in theory as the astronomer his stars. What Mr. Broderick ended up with—for his ramblings brought him to a conclusion—was that love, the great dream of his life, had come to him strangely, and not only strangely but to find him handicapped. To put it plainly, he had fallen in love with a woman wholly out of his reach, since she was the love, also, of his friend.

In coming to this conclusion Mr. Broderick, on his entrance at nightfall to his own grounds, asked himself quite frankly, so frankly as to be himself surprised, whether he, or his friend, had the superior right. And it must be said that this thought did not diminish the vain-gloriousness of the big, oldish young man; he felt rather puffed up by it, his friend becoming in his sight somewhat trifling. If Mr. Everett was, as they had both admitted, sunlight, Mr. Broderick felt that he himself might, and that in an instant, become a storm that, if we may be so permitted to express it, would put the sunlight out of business.

An hour or so later, correct for it, as though entertaining chosen guests, Mr. Broderick was pleased to find that he had, in spite of what had seemed a lavish tea to the young lady, a good appetite for his dinner. There was nothing in this dinner so gently served to him—since it was all so familiar—to distract his thoughts, and if there was one thing on this particular evening our young friend was bent upon it was upon not having his thoughts disturbed. He was bent upon this because he felt that an interruption might bring him face to face with himself, and he was quite sure he was not ready, certainly not quite ready, for that.

Face to face with himself, action would be demanded, and he was not ready for action. Before he began, if he ever did begin, action, there were several questions to be decided. First of all, of course, whether he had the right to act, the right to, as it were, meddle, take a hand in the game of which without intention on his part he had become such a close observer. Was it, after all—he had only met the girl the evening before—any of his affair? And yet, had she herself not made it his affair, first by discussing it, a long-deferred intention bursting forth, with him, and then likening him to the rock of safety she must swim to in case of trouble? That there was a possibility that if he simply remained the rock she would swim to him he hardly doubted, but was it fair that he should wait until the waters dashed over her before he showed a shining surface, in other words, before he put out a hand, if only a hand, between her and the waters making ready, through the vagaries of the sun, the sun being Hal, to dash over her.

Considering all these things, what really was his position, his position including the fact that he had fallen in love with the girl, and also that he was a fitting mate for her? Except possibly the sunlight, he had everything to offer her that Hal had, and, in addition, chastity—she would be his first venture in real love. He thought he might safely add his constancy also—at any rate for a long time, until she herself might weary of him.

Mr. Broderick was too well versed in the theory of love to regard it as a permanent experience, but he did believe that, properly housed and nursed, it might be made to last a long time. He had known of instances, rare 'tis

true, of its lasting for a man's lifetime. Mr. Broderick could not see why one love should not suffice a man provided the object proved worthy, and so tenderly sweet, so chaste and pure of purpose did this girl, his love, now seem that he could even understand it growing day by day more beautiful.

Then, after the serving of coffee, there came to Mr. Broderick an idea, almost a plan, that, figuratively at any rate, lifted him to his feet. He saw a way to put the sunlight out of business and let the storm—it surely would be a storm—rage.

And what was the brilliant plan so suddenly devised by Mr. Broderick? Before divulging that plan it might be well to explain, a very important explanation, that there were two angles from which it might be viewed—a desperately selfish one, or a highly chivalrous one. Let us hope that even in the hour of its conception Mr. Broderick was under the spell of the latter. After all, provided the thought might come to one, it was a simple plan enough. And—here it is, or was:

Hal was in a sense under probation, engaged to the girl under a condition. His failure to comply with that condition would not only free him, but her. If—that is, she had said so—Hal even once more gave himself over to one of his abnormal absences, she, as she had declared, would end it all. Was it, Mr. Broderick put this question to himself, despicable to devise a means to put his friend Hal to the test demanded? Or was he acting honourably in freeing the girl he loved of a man who, and he had little doubt of this, would in the end break her heart?

This was, nor, scarcely, can it be denied, a novel and momentous question, ending up always with the question as to should he butt in at all. Mr. Broderick had not been able during the whole of his soliloquy, to disentangle himself from self-interest. First of all he must, and this unflinchingly, hold before his own eyes, himself in love with the girl. That he had in his secret heart become the rival of his friend he never for one instant attempted to deny, nor could he, in spite of superior advantages in the manner of light-hearted charm, feel that they were evenly matched. If Mr. Everett, always in his mind and there intimately, were the champion light-weight in love, he was, on the other hand, equally the champion heavy. Once in the ring, he felt that there would be little question as to who would lie prone to the suspensive call of ten seconds.

"Am I," asked Mr. Broderick finally when he had taken an armchair beside the window and substituted his pipe for a cigarette, "acting honourably by the girl I love, or dishonourably, disgracefully, by the friend I also love?"

Mr. Broderick finally came to a decision in favour of the girl, or, if one might choose to be uncharitable, himself.

CHAPTER IX

THE following morning that dawned pale and uncertain—in fact, scarcely dawned at all, as we understand dawning—found Mr. Broderick in a sensuous mood, sensuous in the sense of being sympathetic to all things beautiful. Even the dismal scene, viewed from the gigantic window of his bedroom, of his grounds, the issuing stream and his tall trees half lost in vapour appeared beautiful to him.

Through this poetic mist he visualized the earth in spring, the skies in summer, the forests in autumn, and lastly a troubled ocean encircling a bare rock, and a woman, whose naked arms flashed, swimming desperately but steadily towards the rock. With this thought came a new self-revealing. He rejoiced in his strength, even that he was rather supremely, in his grim way, good looking, rejoiced in his hitherto clean life, in his repression, that he was a student, a kindly disposed cynic; rejoiced, also in his possessions, since they were his—in no other way now could he see them—to lay at her feet. She was his, his to be in this place, to escape him at intervals and be seated

like a gipsy on the first step leading down in the rear to spacious, sumptuous grounds.

All these thoughts and the impression of a fair world mysteriously veiled were what had induced the sensuous mood. He almost recognized this when, upon entering the small breakfast room overlooking the selfsame vapour-draped trees, he experienced a pleasurable shock at the sight of a bowl of scarlet flowers occupying the centre of the table. Mr. Broderick actually thought of flowers in a new way, and when his silver pot of tea was at his right hand, he experienced a sense of reverence for God himself, who it seemed to him, all of a sudden, was a most lavish and artistic provider.

Breakfast over, Mr. Broderick rode, with the hope, while riding his favourite nag, of coming to some defined conclusion as just how to put into execution his plan, his adherence to it, considering how wonderfully pleasant the morning had proved, he no longer doubted.

His friend Hal was to be made to hang himself. No man being especially keen to perform such an act, the incentive leading up to it must be sufficiently strong, to allow of no blundering. His plan must not only work; it must work without a hitch. Also, it must work in such a manner as to cause the girl to dash headlong without question into the troubled sea and make for the rock.

If, while cantering along through beautiful, sweet smelling roads, Mr. Broderick found all this exciting, it is not surprising, nor can he be too harshly dealt with for this excitement, for was he not, our gallant young friend, bent upon that noblest of all missions—saving an innocent woman from distress, from a breaking heart? In one mad moment he even went so far—Mr. Broderick had seen women die from the neglect of attractive husbands of the like of Hal—as to think, predict an early grave.

On his return home, his mode of action having become determined, he glanced through the amusement columns of his paper.

CHAPTER X

It happened—shall we say fortunately or unfortunately?—that the London theatres at this particular time were palpitating with feminine attractions, and one particular feminine attraction at one of the famous music halls had, to use the old phrase, taken the town by storm.

Up to the present hour, while in a way something of a theatre-goer, and, in his own mind, a critic of the doings therein, he had given no special thought to the declared beautiful creature. She appeared nightly against a curtain of black velvet as Venus. But now he decided to spend the present evening at the very music hall where the muchly-heralded beauty was disporting.

To this end he called a servant to see to it that a box close to the stage be reserved for him, and punctiliously on time, as he ever was for the theatre, he found himself a somewhat conspicuous figure, alone in that box. Having, as he felt, come to an honourable conclusion, and still harbouring the pleasant feeling of the morning, he gave himself up to an enjoyable mood of patience while awaiting the lady he had come to see.

At ten o'clock, the hour named for her appearance, a hush fell over the house, soft music sounded, the curtain rolled up, and all eyes—Mr. Broderick's certainly not excepted—became fixed on what appeared to be a fathomless sea of no colour, but that was in reality the black velvet curtain against which the fair Austrian was to disclose the form that her critics declared (her critics being her press agents) was an extraordinary piece of human perfection.

In this lavish praise her critics were not wrong, and that, on the instant of her appearance Mr. Broderick, always broad minded, was fair enough to admit. As the posing went on, followed each time by the convulsive clapping of

many hands, more especially male hands, he came to the conclusion that she was all that could be desired, that she in fact fitted in to a "T" with his plans. And then and there he decided upon the place for an after performance supper for the following evening, or as soon as it could be arranged, with the lady no doubt full up to her eyes with engagements.

To expedite things Mr. Broderick, who in his wisdom was not, as has been declared, above the old method of stooping to conquer, did not hesitate to fix the lady's attention on the handsome and well-to-do gentleman who was seated conspicuously alone in a box near the stage, namely himself. Several glances, ill concealed at that, exchanged between them told him, so palpably using his charms, that there was little doubt of his inducing her to forgo other engagements to surrender to him the following night.

The whole thing must have been managed adroitly enough, for the next evening, as though he had not left it at all, found Mr. Broderick in his box again, and a little later, marking a sharp contrast, his fair-haired, extraordinarily handsome friend Hal. Mr. Broderick's first defined thought, after the feeling of security that his friend was there beside him, was that, skilfully guided, he would have little trouble in switching the lady's admiration of him to Hal, that he would soon be able to transfer her eager anticipatory glances from his dark eyes to his friend's blue ones. That Hal was the most charming fellow in the world, and especially to the ladies, was gratefully acceded by him. That Hal was a man almost any woman would fall to, or for, filled him with more of the pleasurable emotions that he was becoming used to. As he had never been jealous of his friend's attractions he was even less jealous of them in the present moment. In fact, every charm possessed by his friend became an asset of his own in his eyes.

Having absolutely no doubt of his Hal falling into the rôle he was assigning him to play, at any rate for the period of three weeks or so, it was up to him to see that the lady herself, the flagrantly announced and declared Venus of her day, played *her* rôle, the rôle of three weeks of capture, equally well.

The feast arranged by Mr. Broderick was to take place in one of the most sumptuous of London's restaurants, and at the hour of eleven we see the lady garbed befittingly and resplendently, as one of a party of three therein, the other two being, it goes without saying, Mr. Broderick and his friend Hal. They were seated at a table that was a shade too ornately, even vulgarly perhaps, decorated with flowers. And as there were too many flowers, there was to be too much wine, and also food. The lady was to be, in fact, dazzled, his way of throwing dust in her eyes—very beautiful eyes at that.

Having indulged in conversation, clever for his purposes, between the acts and on the way to the famous dining place they were now in, Mr. Broderick, after a very proper introduction, was content to look on at his play, quite sure of the last act, the final curtain. While his friend drank, and that plenteously, and fell to becoming, as such people do become, palpably enamoured, he, through the fumes of cigarette smoke, gazed upon a troubled, a violently troubled, sea, through which a girl flashing bare arms swam out to a steadfast rock.

What Mr. Broderick felt was that when she had safely reached the rock they would both begin to live, and outlining, as he did, a wondrous life for them both, can we possibly condemn him for the means he chose to reach that end—the end being, as can hardly be doubted—that of preventing a man from breaking a girl's heart? If, with his eyes upon one of the handsomest faces he had ever seen, Mr. Broderick had any disquieting thoughts about deliberately sacrificing a friend, may it not be possible that he excused himself by centring upon his thought that this very friend was bent upon sacrificing the woman he loved? It seems only

fair to give Mr. Broderick the benefit of the doubt, and to say—more especially since his friend's lips at the moment were pressed to those of a woman altogether a stranger to him an hour before—to say, and quite unreservedly, that he *was* justified in his deportment. Has it ever been denied that all's fair in love and war?

CHAPTER XI

THE thought flashed upon him one morning, a little later, when he stepped from his bath, that, having disposed of his friend, he should now begin, at last, to dispose of himself.

It must not, however, be for one instant supposed that Mr. Broderick disposed of his friend as easily as it appears. We have seen his act, the carrying out of a questionably conceived plan, but we have not become acquainted with all the thoughts and mental reservations that beset him on the way.

When we state he had grown a trifle thinner, certainly whiter, and that there had come to life in him a certain spiritual significance hitherto unnoticed, it may be safe to affirm that while he had rejoiced, as has been confided, in himself, he had also suffered for his friend. That Mr. Broderick, after the conclusion of two weeks, felt justified in his course there is little doubt. But there is little doubt, too, that while pursuing that course he had known pain.

All these malaises had to be stored away before he would feel equal, before his conscience would permit him, to present himself before the one who had, simply, it seemed, through being lovely, provoked them. But now Mr. Broderick was hungry for a sight of this one, this girl, which hunger might, in the minds of those uncharitably inclined, put to rout all his noble considerations.

It was about a week later that he decided to call on his friend Hal, whom he knew to be not there, knew to be safely out of his way, where, in spite of all, he had put him. He chose for his call that magic hour before dinner when people are throwing off practicalities for the call of feasting and soft lights, that hour, more especially in London, which finds men enhanced by evening clothes, and women in ravishing costumes—costumes baring charms that the day has concealed.

He found Mrs. Everett, as usual at this hour, in the drawing-room, surrounded by the usual number of people for her evening's entertainment. Mr. Everett, Hal's father, had been heard to complain that he had never dined alone with either of his wives and on that ground he could easily excuse himself the many little suppers and lunches that he had with other women not averse to a table for two. That his wives were not, at any rate as far as he was concerned, given to secret consort with him, did not disturb him, as he had long since concluded that the only way for a husband to keep up a shadow of interest in his wife was to see her admired, nor could it be too ardently, by other men. He declared that he found the doctor quite stimulating, and was annoyed when he was not on hand.

The only thing, then—all this being known to Mr. Broderick from his confidential friend Hal—left to bewilder him was the transcendent loveliness of the girl, still, in all eyes but his, Hal's sweetheart. She was in a wholly unexpected costume of pale blue satin, as low cut and sleeveless as the rest—a dress that left her, in fact, quite as bare, as exposed as the society she had entered demanded. It was a revelation not altogether, if a bit of a shock, unpleasing. Not only was she a strange creature who would steal away to back porches and crouch gipsy like on steps to look at the moon and stars, but she could, he took it all in with a glance, also grace his home. And as she thus shone out he did not give a hang what became of his unworthy friend, Hal.

This reckless moment, a supreme one, unloosened Mr. Broderick's powers. He was in a thrice at his best. It is difficult to make felt what a resplendent, compelling personality he actually was in this hour. Remember-

ing the man who had refused to be seated beside her on the verandah, who had been so coldly reserved on the grandstand of the racetrack, so self-contained at the tea shop, and who had parted so icily from her after putting her in a taxicab—to see this man holding the table, all naturally amazed, by flashes of learning and epigrammatic speech quite worthy of Wilde himself, or Shaw, to see his eyes flashing intelligence and passion above the white carnation, to see the carnation at all, was a surprise to the girl that took her off her feet. What she did not know, but was to learn later, was that she was witnessing a storm that had, as it were, suddenly come over the hills and eclipsed every ray of the sunlight of an hour before. Just as surely as there are storms that do that very thing, just so surely was Mr. Broderick eclipsing his friend Hal.

With startled eyes upon him, she grew demure, amazed. She felt instinctively, as any woman does feel these things, that this Mr. Broderick, and all he had become, was for her, and that she was for him. When the storm rages, when the thunders roar and lightning flashes, the sun is always forgotten. She was carried away and even a bit frightened, for the most daring flashes, she could feel, were directed at her.

It was only when dinner was over that she returned to herself, only then that she came back to Hal—his absence with no word of explanation—and herself humiliated and staggered. I say staggered because of her resolution not to continue being humiliated, now taking hourly a stronger hold on her. Suddenly she realized through her emotions that here in her hands was the chance that for days she had yearned for, the chance to talk to him, to Hal's friend, to put it all before him and ask his advice. It was all this that caused her at the first possible moment to steal away to the verandah, to make all as it was before, and wait for him.

But instead of going out to her, Mr. Broderick bent all his energies to stimulating his hostess—that is, instead of seeking the girl in the spot she deemed advantageous to her interests, her interests being *his* interests, he devoted himself for the first time, greatly to the surprise of the lady, to Mrs. Everett.

A walk, following a feverish attack of impatience, through the grounds, led the already ruffled little American to a view of the conservatory, where, standing easily among the flowers, she saw Mr. Broderick towering over Mrs. Everett, who was putting forth, and easily plain to see, her fading charms to fascinate him.

It was at this moment that the girl, feeling herself abandoned in all directions, burst into tears, and with the abandonment of a true little American, fell to the ground and lay there shaken by sobs. What this little American was now feeling had been felt before by many another little American, to wit, that the ways and tactics of England were too much for her. Her mind flew to her Virginia home and those days, those hours, when Hal had so unreservedly, so beautifully, crowned her his queen. Again she wished she had died on the day he left for New York. But the workings of the human mind are strange, and all this was presently swallowed up in her desire for the, if only for a moment, exclusive presence of Mr. Broderick. What she felt was that if she could stand by his side and lay her hand, be it ever so lightly, on the sleeve that covered his strong arm, all would be well.

Hers was a nature that cannot respond to unworthiness, that is not fired by neglect. She had told the truth. Stab her pride sufficiently, and strength would come. Hal had stabbed her pride once too often; she yearned to be consoled by Mr. Broderick, to—what a wild thought!—not only touch the sleeve of his coat but fling herself in his arms to do her weeping on his broad breast, rather than on the flat ground.

When she entered the house he was gone and all that she received by way of consolation was a reprimand from

Mrs. Everett, who told her she was simply making a fool of herself over that good-for-nothing chip of the old block, Hal, and that if she had any sense she would keep her eyes open and look around.

CHAPTER XII

To the majority of people waiting is tedious, but there is one kind of waiting that is not tedious. It is the waiting upon a joy that one feels is sure to come, and that one almost fears to face, hardly dares have realized.

It was some such waiting that filled the hours of Mr. Broderick. May had drifted leisurely into June—what so beautiful as June in England?—and Mr. Broderick found himself in a world of floral rejoicing. All about him flowers were breaking into bloom, birds chirped and sang, and doors and windows were left open. So filled was he with all this loveliness appearing as it were out of nothing, unaided, in the world, that it actually seemed not only not tedious but most beautiful to wait.

And one late afternoon, while taking his tea alone in the garden, where roses clung to one end of an old granite wall, and where everything beautiful, including an ancient sundial, was offering itself to him with an added intensity, he dared to actually face, with a somewhat gorgeous sunset fading in the west, what it was that he was actually waiting for.

The answer being a woman, he fell to pondering upon the meaning of all this, the meaning, the many meanings, wrapped up in this patient waiting for a woman. As has been said, Mr. Broderick was, at least theoretically, thoroughly versed in love; he knew more about love, perhaps, than his friend Hal. But he was deficient on the practical side, and now it filled him with joy to feel that he awaited his first experience. He was soon, he felt it would be soon, to press his first kiss upon a woman's lips. Remembering the sweetness of the lips that were to receive his first kiss, that he had not only seen smiles but sensitive tremors pass over them, he himself smiled and gave himself up to a tremor, too. He closed his eyes. How like the breaking of dawn, ushering in a day of resplendence!

So satisfying were the thoughts of Mr. Broderick on this lovely afternoon, as he dreamed his first dream of love, that it is quite safe to affirm that had his friend Hal returned, sprung up to interfere, he would have forsaken his subtle methods for purely obvious ones —that he would have declared himself Hal's rival and fought for the girl they both wanted in open combat. So bent now was Mr. Broderick upon the lady of his choice that had foul means failed to work—provided we consider them foul—he would have won her by fair, his superior strength, his superior advantages. He would have left nothing undone.

And while these very thoughts were upon him in front of him appeared a servant bearing in his hand a card with *her* name engraved upon it.

"I have admitted the lady, sir," said the footman, "to the library."

"I will see her," answered Mr. Broderick, quietly enough, "in the drawing-room. Have it fully lit and show her there."

In giving this order Mr. Broderick was not only bestowing upon the lady the consideration he wished to bestow upon her, but also gaining time for his own composure.

When the lady herself, who had not only disturbed the composure of Mr. Broderick, but that of his servants as well, found herself in the drawing-room, a place, to use her own thoughts, quite as big as a barrack or public dance hall, she was somewhat overpowered by the magnificence of it. It was as exaggeratedly high as it was exaggeratedly spacious, it boasted innumerable windows and it was decorated in yellow satin. Being, according to Mr. Broderick's orders, fully lit, it was, this gigantic deep room, almost blindingly ablaze.

It cannot be denied, apart from what

had brought her here, that for the first moment after finding herself alone she felt dazed and confused. Colonial homes and big rooms were not new to her; but a room like this one, dating far and away beyond Colonial days, was almost appalling. She wore a dark dress, with dark gloves, had on a rather big hat, dark too, black maybe, and her face, greatly changed since Mr. Broderick last saw it, was markedly white and tragic. She did not sit down, but stood merely, with her hands hard clasped, gazing straight ahead of her at the door through which she had entered and through which she supposed Mr. Broderick would also enter to find her.

She was not to be disappointed. He did enter through that same door. Inside, he paused, glanced about as though to find her, and, having found her, of course, although she looked to him as small as a bird, he came forward to greet her.

It was only when standing directly in front of her that he divined that something most unusual, something far more than to report the continued absence of Hal, report and be advised, had brought her to his home alone, and at the unconventional hour of dusk.

"Have you," she asked in a husky voice as she waved greetings, "heard the news?"

"What news?"

She stared at him. There was nothing to help her then. He—this being all too evident apart from his denial—had not heard. It was incumbent upon her to tell, tell what she had come hoping merely to discuss.

While her eyes, agonized out of much of their beauty, held his steadfastly, as though she dare not shift them, she began wringing her hands.

"It's all too trashy," she said, "flimsy! I can't talk about it."

"What is?"

"Hal," she got it out, burst it forth, "is dead, you know!"

Her eyes did not shift, nor did his.

"Dead?" he echoed.

"Yes."

She wondered if it was she who was speaking. It was not her voice. The light was strong. Her eyes shifted a second and then went back to their place in his. Could she go on?

"Yes," she repeated. "He was shot in Vienna last night. It's all in the papers. An Austrian count shot him about a woman, an actress, or something. Here," she opened her handbag nervously, "is the account of it. There can be do doubt. It was just like Hal. The woman had been acting or something, at the Palace, posing, I believe. She went to Vienna from here. Hal went with her. The count—here, read it—was in love with her. Hal laughed at him and kissed the woman in his presence. The man, this count, shot him and then himself. He fired at the woman, too, but she escaped. Didn't I tell you," she began to laugh, to gurgle a laugh, "it's all too trashy, flimsy, theatrical; it makes me ashamed. He was *mine* you know, *mine!* We were going to be married, you know it all, if— And he could insult me this way! And I didn't get the chance to resent it! He's gone!"

For just a moment Mr. Broderick's eyes were beyond her. But for a moment only, for another hysterical outburst brought him back to her.

"It's the most horrible thing," he heard her saying, "that ever happened, isn't it?"

"I can't say that."

Mr. Broderick hardly knew what he had answered.

"But it is, though, for *me*, his family —even *you!*"

"Yes," said Mr. Broderick, with his mind on the woman two men had died for, the beautiful woman he had introduced, painted in on the scene, "even me."

His voice was cold, his manner colder. It affected her, threw her back on herself. She saw where she was. Her eyes strayed a moment and shifted to settle in a stare in his.

"I suppose," she said, "you think I shouldn't have come here!"

For just a brief moment Mr. Brode-

rick saw the bare rock in mid-ocean and the white flashing arms of a woman swimming desperately towards it.

"I understand your coming," he said to her, rather gently.

"I had to! I've been nearly crazy there in the house alone!"

"Alone?"

"Yes, and I'm afraid to go back there! They, Mr. and Mrs. Everett, have gone on to Vienna for the body. Hal's *body!*"

She paused terror-struck as if the whole significance of things were drowning her. For an instant she disappeared under the turbulent waves.

"I'm afraid I might do something desperate!"

"You won't do anything desperate."

"I might!"

"You will wait there for me."

"You?"

"Yes, I will follow you immediately."

"Can't you," her hand touched his sleeve, and she was whispering, "go with me?"

Instinctively Mr. Broderick's eyes travelled in the direction of the servants' quarters.

"No," he said. "I will follow you."

He walked over and rang.

When the servant entered he ended the interview by ordering that she be conducted to her car.

CHAPTER XIII

THAT which confronted Mr. Broderick when he found himself alone was not the girl now rapidly speeding from him with his rather emphatic consent, not what his servants might or were thinking, but solely himself. It may be that his too quick acquiescence, without even the offer of a glass of wine to appease her strain, was due to the necessity he felt to face himself and face himself alone.

If we have attempted to deal leniently with Mr. Broderick in the past, how much more are we called upon now, not only to deal but to extend, enlarge upon that leniency! Certain it is that while he did intend premeditatedly to wing his game, and so cause the bird to fall and flutter awhile in the bullrushes of his imagination, he had not expected to kill. What he wanted, all that he wanted, was to get it for the time being out of his way while he brought down fairer game, another bird.

Believing this, one can well imagine the feelings of Mr. Broderick, thus facing himself as a murderer, not only a murderer, but the murderer of his best friend, his life-long companion!

"Hal," said Mr. Broderick aloud as he groped his way about the big room, "dear old chap!" And those were the only words that, out of an avalanche of muddled thought, fell from his lips.

There is something majestic about a conquering hero suddenly become a man battling to conquer the turbulent workings, the regrets and reproaches of his own heart. And such surely, at the moment, was Mr. Broderick—a man unquestionably the victor, unquestionably on the verge of all he had striven for, but with a crushed and, as a matter of fact, almost breaking heart. It is all very well for the storm with its own beneficial ends in view to put out the sunlight for a while, but alas, not altogether, with no hope of its ever shining again! That was just what this big and now ungainly fellow, who looked his sorrow, had done.

Perhaps, by way of extending our leniency, we may argue that Mr. Broderick had nothing to do with the whole tragic affair. Perhaps no one has anything to do with what he does. At any rate, that is how Mr. Broderick —after all young and boyish—was trying to see the thing. Let us endeavour to join him in this effort.

Perhaps to fight his opponent was more than natural, a preordained arrangement, a result of his inheritance. Perhaps he was the descendant of some old Roman who had transmitted not only the inclination to conquer whatever was in his way, but also the method, the strategy. Perhaps all these things that he was doing, felt called upon to do, in a social way, namely to

win, at any cost, the thing he strove for, were but the echoes woven in him of the spirit of some gallant old soldier of war. Certainly, like a soldier, he could rest in his tent; certainly he could survey his field; and certainly he could plan and act. If it happened that in his day and generation his field of action was the social world, his object of attainment a woman's heart, was he not at heart none the less a brave, cool, deliberate—we hate to say unscrupulous, too—warrrior?

It has not been claimed for Mr. Broderick that he was a simple man, direct in all he did; on the contrary, he was a very complex man, rather given to being indirect. He was not outspoken and frank. He was both secretive and discreet. Nevertheless it cannot be said that he was not both brave and courageous, a man in full consciousness of his own convictions. If wisdom had taught him caution, taught him to move with deliberation and deadly aim, is there anyone so bold, so daring, as to decry wisdom? All his life scorning wants, scarcely recognizing that they, his wants, had been supplied, he now found himself at the end of the road.

Suddenly, though, his tears only partially controlled, Mr. Broderick was again on his feet. If he had, grant all the worst, murdered, been the instrument of that quick murder of his friend, had he not saved *her*, the woman he loved—and of this he had not a shadow of doubt—from *slow* murder, a *slow* death.

Seeing it in this way, feeling this as his excuse, his eyes even yet blinded by the sunlight, the sunlight still being Hal, he was nevertheless now ready, the great storm of love that he was, to go bravely, with head erect, to the woman who had from the first moment of their meeting, made him what he was to-day.

Mr. Broderick knew why he could thus hold up his head and go forth undaunted to a questionable task. Long ago, long ago as his university days, he had made wisdom his friend, and does not wisdom first, last and always teach that very lesson, that whether the past be good, bad, indifferent, or even pronouncedly evil, one must still stand erect and march forward to one's goal?

CHAPTER XIV

He found her where he had first actually discovered her, where he had first actually loved her, crouched up, in fact, on the top step of the five leading to the grounds of the home she had become an inmate of.

As she sprang to her feet at the sound of his footstep, and stood staring wild-eyed at him, the black dress blotting out all of her except neck, face and arms, he could have sworn that the darkness parting them was the seething ocean through which she was making her way to him, through which she was swimming out to the rock. And feeling this, Mr. Broderick became that rock, hard as adamant to all that had occurred through him to her and himself, even to Hal.

Standing there, illumined by his indifference to all but the present moment that was hurling her at him, into his arms, he remained tautly rigid awaiting her approach.

And she did approach with a leap!

"What's to become of me?" she asked breathlessly.

"You are quite all right," said Mr. Broderick. "You have reached port, that's all."

"Reached port?"

"Yes," he vigorously covered the distance between them, "you have reached *me*. *I* am what it all means. You came to England to me. Hal was the envoy of the invisibles to bring you to me, the gilded messenger elected to go for you. His part is over, yours and mine begun. It is quite logical. You are mine. You have always been mine. You must learn to know that, to feel it, that Hal crossed the seas to bring you to me. Can you," he bent to her, "learn to feel that?"

"No," she pushed him from her, "go

away." I can never learn to feel anything!" She was half whispering.

"You are feeling now," he retorted sharply.

"Yes," she still whispered, "I *am* feeling. I am feeling all the horror!"

She stepped back facing him, charged with an added alarm.

"I'm unnerved," she burst forth, "unnerved. I'm all unstrung! It's not so that I am feeling! I didn't tell the truth! I can't feel—I can't think!"

He surprised her by a placid smile.

"You can think of me!" he said.

"You!" she covered her eyes with one of the hands that had worked ruin, but immediately freed her gaze.

"No," she said, staring bewildered, as though she had never seen him before, "go away, you frighten me!"

Mr. Broderick even smiled again as he answered.

"You are quite safe."

He paused then as though to make sure of his way, make sure perhaps of not too quickly going too far. But went on, speaking with deliberation and emphasis.

"It is your love for me that is alarming you. You are afraid that in the circumstances it is sacrilege. It is not. It is fate. I have told you it was all arranged. You are to blame for nothing, nor," he straightened and his eyes blazed a moment, "am I. It's all fate," he repeated, "meet it, meet it bravely, as—as I shall!"

She again stepped back from him, her features growing a bit haggard.

"Why do you tell me," she flung at him, her voice now ringing, "that I love you? It's wicked for you to say that! The whole thing is wicked, wicked—a hollow mockery!"

"If we make it such," Mr. Broderick answered, calmly enough.

A strange light seemed then to settle upon his face and he opened his arms to her.

"Never mind it all," he said in a low voice. "Come to me, come into my arms!"

She laughed in his face, nervously, hysterically, and stood staring at him, blinded by the beauty of the light upon his stern immobile countenance that was so like sun on an old grey rock.

"Come!" he repeated.

"No!"

"Come!"

"No!"

He advanced a step to fire his fatal shot.

"I love you!" he thrust at her.

"Stop!" Her eyes flashed and her hands flew up. "Go away!"

"I love you!"

"Go away! I'm afraid of you!"

"I love you!"

She swayed slightly and her left hand with the fingers opened sought her cheek.

"My God!" she said with her eyes fastened on his.

"Come!"

"No!"

The beating of her heart frightened her, but she took a step forward.

"Come!"

Her no failed her, and she remained motionless, trying to shift her gaze, trying not to look at him. She persisted in this, kept it up for several moments, and then, as though the lightning of the storm he had elected to make of himself, the lightning of his eyes had struck her, she gave a low cry, staggered up and threw herself sobbing into his arms.

He held her thus, hard pressed to him, the night alone catching the look, the godlike wicked triumph of his face, until a servant appeared and announced that the Doctor had arrived to see her.

She broke from him, looking around. "The Doctor!" she exclaimed.

"I ordered him to come," said Mr. Broderick, "to offer you the attention you need. He will give you something to put you to sleep."

"You did that," she breathed, "you thought of that!"

He dismissed the servant with a message and then bent low to her.

"I love you. I shall remember everything," he said, and turned and left her.

CHAPTER XV

A WARM, sweet night in late August, dense with the perfumes of recent harvests. Another rear verandah, deeper, broader, a verandah of old granite, opening out upon a lawn of sumptuous splendour with far reaching scenes beyond, far reaching nature scenes veiled by night. No moon. Dampness. Heat. Two beings on a low swinging porch seat, half lost in the shadows of night, half saturated by the midnight dampness and the heat.

HE: (*Bending toward her.*) Do you love me?

SHE: (*Under her breath*) Yes! I love you!

HE: Are you sure?

SHE: (*Faintly.*) Yes, I am sure.

HE: No one else?

SHE: (*Dreamily.*) No one else.

HE: No *thing* else?

SHE: No thing else.

HE: You have forgotten every one and all things but me?

SHE: (*Looking out on the night.*) I have forgotten every one and every thing but you.

HE: (*Sharply*) All your past?

SHE: Yes.

HE: Him?

SHE: (*Slowly*) Yes.

HE: Virginia?

SHE: (*Slowly*) Yes. (*She turns quickly to him*) You will (*her voice is eager*) take me there some day?

HE: You are not to think of that! Do you love me enough to see only the present, only me?

SHE: (*Faintly*) Yes.

HE: Can you stand more of my embraces?

SHE: No!

HE: May I kiss you once more?

SHE: No!

HE: (*Angrily*) Then I will leave you.

SHE: No! No!

(*He kisses her long and passionately.*)

SHE: (*Lying back and closing her eyes*) Ah!

(*Silence, breathlessness, and more fragrance stealing in out of the meadows.*)

SHE: (*With her eyes still closed*) Kiss me again.

HE: No!

SHE: (*Laughing*) Half a kiss.

HE: No!

SHE: My fingers then?

HE: No!

SHE: Let me run them through your hair.

HE: No!

SHE: I love your hair!

HE: (*Bending to her*) You are a temptress.

SHE: (*Opening her eyes*) I am what you have made me.

HE: What is that?

SHE: I don't know.

HE: Shall I tell you?

SHE: Yes, tell me!

HE: My mistress.

SHE: (*Laughing*) But we are married.

HE: That is for the world.

SHE: It is for me.

HE: Yes, for you! Everything is for you!

SHE: Whatever I am, it is your fault.

HE: I admit that. Do you mind?

SHE: I mind nothing. I love you!

HE: (*Jealously*) *Entirely?*

SHE: Yes, entirely. I worship you. If I thought to-morrow night would not be like this one I should die.

HE: (*Speaking rapidly*) A year from now we shall give a formal dinner. I may then be able to introduce you as my wife. Until then you are nothing but my love!

(*She laughs softly. A bird sings and she springs forward to listen.*)

SHE: What is that?

HE: A nightingale.

SHE: I have never heard one before.

HE: He knows that and is singing to you.

(*The bird ceases and she leans back in her pillows.*)

SHE: I am tired.

HE: (*Starting to rise*) Go to your room; go to rest!

SHE: No, no, I can't! Listen! The bird is singing again! Such a sound! How beautiful!

HE: *You* are beautiful.

SHE: (*Reaching out to listen*) Ah! it has stopped! (*She leans back again in her pillows.*)

(*Silence. More fragrance. She sleeps. He watches. The bird sings at intervals. His thoughts stray. He is thinking of Hal. He thinks he sees Hal coming up the walk, and springs to his feet.*)

(*It awakens her and she springs up too. He leads her away, rather quickly, into the house.*)

SUSPENSE

By Dennison Varr

LA PALOMA, the queen of the air, started on her precarious trip across the tight rope. Thousands of eyes followed her eagerly as she progressed step by step. Little by little she advanced, nearer and nearer to her goal. Soon only a few steps separated her from the end. Suddenly a groan arose from the multitude below. She had reached the other side in safety.

THE hardest moment in the life of a woman is when she marches up the aisle, observes her victim emerging from the vestry with his best man, hears the first raucous measures of the "Lohengrin" march—and has to throttle the impulse to give three cheers.

EXPERIENCE is the product of having sinned and been punished for it. Wisdom is the product of having sinned and got away with it.

A WOMAN'S ideal is the sort of man her husband would have been if he had never married her.

SHALL WE DINE, MELISSE?

By Gertrude Brooke Hamilton

IN France, Mélisse Dragée had been "*la rosière*"—winner of the rose for being the best-behaved girl of her village. In New York, Mélisse was—so she told herself—a *chandelle de glace*. Yes, she was just a candle of ice, prismatic, slim, pointed! Her curls, fingers and toes were so like icicles that an ice-splinter ballet had been written especially for her in the "Follies." Her eyes, lips and teeth were so sparkling that her admirers called her a bonbon dipped in frost.

It was true that the heart of Mélisse was *arrêté par les glaces*. She had lost her lover, Lothaire Pepin, in the wars. Ever since then, her behaviour had been governed by cool prudence, rather than rose-coloured innocence. Marthe, her sister, had seen the *curé* of their village killed by a shell, and could still pray. Her brother, Luce, had mislaid his wits and a leg at the front, and kept his belief in the saints. But when beads were said *en famille*, Mélisse found the *aves* and *paters* like frozen raindrops on her lips; and, not infrequently, her mother, the plump Maman Dragée, made the sign of the cross over her, and cried, "May the Blessed Virgin preserve thee from misfortune!"

Mélisse had a shrug for the cry. What greater misfortune could come to her than losing Lothaire Pepin?

Maman Dragée, knowing the cities, could conjure up infinite misfortune for her pretty Mélisse; she was constantly begging the little one to stop dancing in the theatres and help Marthe serve food in the *rôtisserie* which the Dragées had come from their devastated village to open in a quiet section of New York.

Maman was a superb cook. Luce was not too witless to fiddle dinner-tunes. Marthe was a capable *fille de salle*.

Maman called the little cook-shop "*La Rosière*," after her darling, Mélisse. She had climbed a ladder, the plump *mère*, to hang a garland of silk roses in the window beyond the roasting fowls and the glowing gridirons. The menu-cards on the glass-topped tables were stamped with wreaths of roses. Roses were painted even on the blue-grey chairs of the best-behaved *rôtisserie* in the village of Manhattan.

Mélisse had her own reasons for not helping Marthe with the service. She had made up her mind—the candle of ice—to marry a rich American. In cap and apron, busy with *dinettes*, one could not effervesce. In crystals, enhanced by footlights—*C'est çà!*

In the theatres, one soon learns the game of hearts and diamonds: there is the intimate chatter of the dressing-rooms, the feminine badinage that reveals so much to ears delicately a-cock! There is the intoxication of the boards, the masculine applause that means so much to dancing feet! And there is the stage-door, the ancient *pont des soupirs!*

From the beginning, Mélisse quickly learned to distinguish a *riche* from a giddy-head; she would have nothing to do with the Messieurs Johnnies. She waited—cunningly—for the heart that meant diamonds.

La pauvre Mélisse, who had been well-behaved in her village! In secret, she all but snapped her fingers in the face of *le bon Dieu*. Let Marthe recall the death of the gentle *curé*, and

hug her beads; let Luce tap his emptied head, and kneel each night and morning—Mélisse carried in her breast a congealed heart, and in her feet a wanton waywardness. She would wed a *raffiné. Ciel!* She would bedeck herself with jewels.

As she was so pretty, and in the limelight, she had not long to wait for her rich American. He appeared in the person of Charley Goddard, confirmed bachelor of affirmed wealth, a *bon vivant* partial to the tinkle of ice; a fat little man, fastidiously dressed, garrulous, good-humoured. He was introduced to Mélisse *sans gêne*, by a dressing-room friend. *Voilà*—had she been serving Maman's excellent food in a quiet section of town, the introduction would not have taken place. As it was the rich little bachelor expressed himself enchanted by her "ice-splinter" ballet and paid her many compliments.

Charley had the gossip of the theatres at the end of his tongue. He rehashed some titbits concerning the little star of the ice-ballet:

"They say, Mlle. Mélisse, that you were born in Lapland and educated extravagantly in Paris. Is it true? Also, I've heard that as a baby they gave you snow-baths and reindeer milk, to make you fair. The beauty treatment was a success, mademoiselle!"

"Yees, monsieur," laughed Mélisse, whose English was restricted.

"They say," continued the convivial Goddard, that he might hear her laughter tinkle again, "your favourite relish is Chili sauce and your favourite beverage iced *eau sucré*."

He chuckled, leaning on his stick, and regarding her exquisite teeth with appreciation.

Mélisse lifted slight shoulders. "*Qu'en-dira-t'on!*" And, in her halting, crystallized English, "Dey say ver' mooch feedle-faddle, monsieur."

"So they do!" averred the stout bachelor. "'Pon my word, they have an outlandish tale for every new face that takes the public fancy. There's the girl who made us acquainted just now; d'you know what they said of her? They had it about that the desert cradled her and an ostrich reared her. I give you my word, they did!"

He laughed, heartily.

Charley had two chins, each jollier than the other; his chins became more evident when he was mirthful.

"And just as ridiculous things are said of us on t'other side of the footlights," he declared. "Now, aren't they?"

"Yees, monsieur." She was demure.

"Don't you believe any hobgoblin stories; we old flounders who applaud you are good as gold."

The statement had its touch of pathos, Charley's face being lined and relined by his frolicking.

"Gold ees ver' good," dimpled Mélisse, from her lost belief in God and love.

"So it is," nodded her new friend.

His glance at her very young face was a trifle curious, cheerfully sardonic. He tapped the toe of his boot with the tip of his stick.

"Perhaps I should have said of us, 'good for gold,'" he jested, with a sigh. "That's about all we're good for, eh?—to give parties and pay for 'em."

She parried his sigh by the tinkling laugh that made the town talk of her.

Charley became tolerant, entirely affable.

"May I give you a party sometime this week, Mlle. Mélisse? he asked, not without eagerness.

"*Mais non*," slid involuntarily from her soft lips.

She covered the quick words by a lifting of her shoulders, and a vivacious "Oh, la, I might be lak' ze *autruche* at ze party—lak' ze—oostrich—hidin' in ze sand. I t'ink, no, monsieur."

She hunched her shoulders and made pigeon-toes of her feet, to express how ill at ease she might be at the party.

Now Charley Goddard was a genial soul, who linked youth with hilarity. If he knew anything of frozen love, time had obliterated most of the cognizance. He was inclined to pat the snowflake hand of Mélisse.

"If you feel you'd be an ostrich

among us, then we'll make it a desert affair and all come in feathers. How's that?"

Mélisse shook her head.

"*Merci*,—and, *non*, monsieur."

Charley was not to be rebuffed.

"Then how about a party with all of us in Laplander furs and snow-shoes?" he suggested.

Her gesture discarded the idea.

"Feedle-faddle, monsieur!" gaily.

"Can it be,"—he was jocular—"that so fair a maiden does not care for parties, at all? If so, we must find some other means of becoming better acquainted. What shall we do?" He tapped his chins with his stick. "Shall we dine?"

She made little fins of her hands.

"*J'aime la table*," she conceded, thinking of Maman's cooking and *La Rosière*. "I t'ink it ees ze *grande passion*—ze only taste lef' one."

She nibbled her under lip, as if it were a sugar crystal.

He lifted his eyebrows.

"So, you're a *gourmande*," he exclaimed, humorously.

He held out his hand to her. "Who'd think that we had tastes in common, the gold flounder and the ice splinter? There is nothing," emphatically, "that I like better than the table. But you!"

He laughed at her ultra-slimness, suggestive of humming-bird fare.

Mélisse laughed with him.

"It amus' you," she murmured. "*C'est bon*."

"It tickles me to death," he assured her. "More times than I can tell you, I've embarrassed a fair one by roaring at a head-waiter or losing my temper over coldish soup. I can stand anything easier than coldish soup!"

He expatiated on the subject.

"Good food is as hard to find nowadays as a good woman," he confided to her; "I don't know what's hit the town in the stomach, whether it's the high cost of edibles or the low cost of human lives, but most places have gone off on their food and their service. I give you my word, I've combed the town. And I can count the really good eating places on the fingers of one hand."

He blew out his cheeks with a sigh that expressed bygone feasts; perfectly done roasts, soups served zestily, salads iced to a nicety, sweets of melting deliciousness, coffee of fragrant aroma and pungent flavour—the food of another decade!

"The question of the day," he remarked, sadly, "is where to dine, mademoiselle."

She nibbled her lip again.

"It ees true, vat you say, ov ze worl', monsieur," she grimaced. She forked her fingers. "*Garbotage!—ouf!*"

Charley beamed upon her.

"We're going to like each other famously. Famously! Your feet are ravishing, mademoiselle. Your tastes are relishable. May the ostrich of the desert who made us acquainted have fine feathers all her life!"

He blew a kiss toward the dressing-room door of the girl who had introduced them.

"And now, mademoiselle," he added, briskly, "when shall I have the pleasure of dining with you?"

Mélisse demurred.

"Each of us 'as made a fr'end," she murmured, in dulcet tones. And, in cooler cadence, "As to dinin' wiz you, monsieur—"

Her shrug conveyed that she did not care to break bread with him as yet. He might take it as caution, or leave it as coldness; as he would. Though her knowledge of language was restricted, the loss of love had, somehow, rendered her rather cunning—*la pauvre* Mélisse, greedy for diamonds.

"I shan't be happy until I face you across the table," declared Charley, tenaciously.

He made her a bow.

"It is *au revoir*, not good-bye, Mlle. Mélisse."

Her downcast eyes acknowledged the bow, while her up-curving lips framed, "*Au revoir*."

II

CHARLEY GODDARD left her with an anticipative step, throwing out his stick ahead of him and catching it on the rebound.

Mélisse—when he was out of sight and sound—twirled on her toes and lighted a cigarette.

She had met her very rich American. *A la bonne heure!* The way was clear before her, like a glacial slide. She had only to dance, laugh, coquette—and have her wits about her. She thoughtfully puffed her cigarette. In the theatres, one hears whispers of fragile unfortunates, of thin places on the slide, of holes, and knots—Mélisse came down on her heels, to take off her *glacé* slippers and put on her street boots. *Vogue la galère!* She smoked her volatile weed with a touch of insouciance.

Luce, her one-legged, witless brother, awaited her at the stage exit. He was a tall lad, with a crutch, and the smile of an infant. He had brought along a cape for Mélisse, the air having a touch of frost in it.

"I saw a star almost in the cradle of a crescent moon to-night," he told her, in their native tongue; "that means winter is coming, Lise."

He looked up at the night sky, as if he were in the country—Luce was apt to think himself still a child, in the village of his birth.

Mélisse slipped an arm through his. "Yes, winter is coming, *petit frère*," she said, in tender tones.

She left the district of incandescents, of playhouses and play, feet in slow rhythm with her brother's crutch. It was true that the cold weather was coming. Mélisse half shivered. Involuntary thoughts—thoughts like a lost breath of summertime—came into her mind. She recalled a road that led to Paris, and a walk in the summertime with Lothaire Pepin. Slowly, rhythmically, her thoughts covered the details of a lost summer morning:

. . . It was not long after dawn, the sky was *couleur de rose*, a grove of chestnut trees was in full leaf, the birds were singing.

Lothaire Pepin—a rose grower—was trudging beside his donkey cart, heaped with great golden roses to be sold in Paris. He was a stalwart, full-throated *jouvenceau*, in gardener's breeches and smock. The sun turned his hair to burnished copper and his skin to a colour not unlike his roses.

Mélisse, in yellow under-petticoat with chemisette and *ceinture* of scarlet, was a slim *jouvencelle*—a lass young as the morning, warm as the sunlight!

She was going with him as far as the wayside shrine at the cross-roads. There they would kiss. She would return to the village. He would cry, "*Hue!*" to his flap-eared donkey, and go on to Paris for a day of rose-vending.

They made love, walking along the summer road.

"When we are married, I shall go with thee all the way to Paris," she told him, pinching his shoulder. "I shall no longer have to kneel at the shrine and ask the Virgin to keep thee from temptation."

"Temptation?" Lothaire put a young arm about her. "None are so tempting as thou."

She turned her head to kiss the shoulder she had pinched, as she walked with him.

"And thou!" she answered, softly. "I think *le bon Dieu* smiled when He made a man like thee."

Lothaire contented himself with squeezing her slender waist and fingering the scarlet girdle that confined it.

They walked in happy unison, summertime underfoot and overhead.

Their steps slowed in approaching the wayside shrine at the cross-roads.

'Ah, if I could go with thee all the way!" she sighed.

"Going makes coming back all the sweeter, little one." Lothaire threw the donkey's rein over his elbow, stooping to Mélisse for the cross-road caress.

They held hands and kissed in front

of the shrine of Our Lady, a painted wooden statue set on a tree-stump with a rustic *prie-Dieu* below it.

Head bronze in the sunshine, Lothaire went on toward Paris with his donkey and his cart heaped with gold roses. Head bent, Mélisse knelt at the rustic prayer-rail and asked the Virgin to keep her handsome lover safe on the unsafe *boulevards* of the wicked city.

At twilight, Lothaire Pepin returned —with an empty cart and a *joujou* for Mélisse.

"Thou art good!" she cried joyously kissing his golden-hued cheeks.

"And thou!" he answered, catching her up in his arms, swinging her to his shoulder and carrying her villageward through the verdant dusk.

"Thou, Lise, art my *rosière!*"

The sky above them was lavender and blue; the chestnut trees were in shadow; the birds were twitting. The love-hour of a summer day!

It seemed as if golden roses and love might go on growing, *à jamais à tout*—for ever and for ever!

Eh bien! The rose-coloured dawns had not changed. The birds had gone on nesting in the trees. But the wars had come. Lothaire Pepin had gone.

A comrade returning from the front had brought the word that Lothaire had been taken prisoner by the Germans. *Le mot terrible!* The galloping months brought no news of Lothaire. The wayside shrine was shattered, the wooden statue and *prie-Dieu* were demolished, in the devastation that swept the village. Driven before the storm of war, with Maman and Marthe, confronted at every turn by the red rivers of war, Mélisse gave Lothaire up as lost.

Eh bien, yes! The love-birds had gone on singing. The dawns had broken red and gold. Summers had come, and gone.

Mélisse—loveless, frozen—had come to America with Maman, Marthe and Luce. . . .

Walking with the befuddled Luce through the streets of New York, the little dancer of the Follies told herself that she no longer believed in the Virgin.

"*Je n'oublierai jamais!*" she cried, under her cold breath.

To-night she had scant appetite for the hot plate of *haricot de mouton* that Maman Dragée had ready for her pet who would dance in the theatres. She yawned, as if sleepy; and soon climbed the flight of stairs that led from the cook-shop to the upper room she shared with Marthe. Her young sister was sleeping healthily, having turned down the covers and left the softest pillow for Mélisse. The *danseuse* undressed and crept into the blankets. She hated the winter that was coming—picturing herself hung with icicle diamonds, walking city *boulevards* beside a rubicund little husband, who threw his stick before him as he went!

III

MÉLISSE found a basket of tangerines and white grapes on her dressing-shelf in the theatre. She made fins of her hands over the card on which Charley Goddard had penned, "*J'aime la table, aussi.*" Though she gave the fruit to the girl who had introduced Charley, she nibbled an icicle in her ballet that night. Her admirer was on the other side of the footlights—of course. She frolicked without gravity, a clinking prism, a greedy snow-sprite. Afterwards, she quickly cloaked herself, to go home with Luce.

She did not converse with her rich little bachelor for a week or two, though nearly every night he came to see her dance, and, almost every midnight, the girl who had introduced them feasted on cold dainties—from lobster vinaigrette to frosted plumcake!

One night Charley was nimbler than usual, and waylaid Mélisse in a wing.

He confronted her, leaning on his stick; fat, fastidiously dressed, garrulous.

"Aren't we any better acquainted?" he asked her, with his touch of drollery. "Haven't my patés and my plums forwarded our friendship?"

A pucker of absurd anxiety appeared in his forehead.

"Will you dine with me to-morrow, Mlle. Mélisse?" he smiled.

"*Mais oui*, monsieur," she replied, laughing.

"You will?" He applauded with his stick. "That's tiptop!"

He made her his lavish bow.

"And where, mademoiselle, shall we eat together?"

She was dimpling. "At *La Rosière*, monsieur."

He made a note of the name on a memorandum tablet.

"*La Rosière*, you say?" he chuckled. "It's a new place; isn't it? The name sounds promising—a roseate cabaret, eh? A trifle Frenchy, in keeping with your Parisian education and infantile beauty course."

Inclined to wink jovially, he pictured *La Rosière:*

"Entered through a luxuriant tunnel of roses, I imagine. The hat-boys in rose-coloured livery, tra-la. The air vibrating with lilting music. Overhead, embowering rose-blossoms and green arches, through which peek flower-faces and from which are showered rose-petals. A charming name—*La Rosière!*"

He tapped the memorandum block with a gold pencil. His face was not unlike the jocular moon of a Broadway dawn. "And your hotel, Mlle. Mélisse? Where shall we meet? At what hour?"

"*A sept heure*," replied Mélisse. "In *La Rosière*, monsieur."

She slipped out through the stage-door to Luce.

IV

La Rosière—as Mélisse well knew—was not entered through a tunnel of roses. The only music was the scraping of Luce's fiddle. The ceiling was white as driven snow, plain as that of a nunnery. Marthe could by no means be termed flower-faced. And the plump Maman Dragée, turning golden-brown fowls and dishing hot soups and vegetables before the glowing grates! Her ankles, though trim, were bulky. Her raiment was not diaphanous. Her eyes were only for the pots and pans. *La bonne cuisinière! La bonne mère!*

Mélisse blew a cloud of cigarette smoke over the glass-topped table which Charley had reserved by telephone. It was not quite the appointed hour, not quite seven o'clock. The youthful favourite of the "Follies" wore blue with flashes of silver. She was in a mood blue and silvery. *Tiens!* She planned fine attire for Maman Dragée, as she awaited the confirmed bachelor of affirmed wealth. And for Marthe, *sa jeune soeur.* And for Luce, the innocent.

She broke a cloudlet of smoke by a fleck of her finger: Charley was hanging his hat and stick on a grey-blue wooden peg of the *rôtisserie.*

He looked about the place for Mélisse.

The tables were occupied by diners intent on their food; threadbare artistic fellows, who ate with absorbed gusto, thread-needle girls, whose neck-bones showed that this was their meal of the day.

Charley brightened when he saw the sliver of loveliness in blue and silver. Approaching, he was inclined to wag a finger at her, as if to cry, "For shame, playing a joke on your flounder!—rose-petals and hat-boys, ta! ta!"

Instead, he shook hands with her, and sat at the glass-topped table as if all the feasting palaces were damasked that way.

"Do you dine here?" he inquired genially, picking up a menu-card and examining it.

"*Naturellement*," replied Mélisse, eyes dancing.

"Along with a sense of humour, you have common sense, mademoiselle?" Charley's eyebrows were interrogative.

She formed crescents of smoke on her red lips.

Charley cogitated over the rose-garland adorning the menu.

"Just why do they call it *La Rosière?*" he pondered, amusedly. "What does it mean?"

"*On dit*," answered Mélisse, eyes drooping, "it means a vell-moraled girl, monsieur. 'Av you not hear 'ow ze *curé* crown ze bes' village girl wiz flowers, in Maytime?"

Her lashes were like dark feathers against the cream of her cheeks. Her voice was a trifle glazed.

"Ah," exclaimed Charley, enlightened, "that is why you come here—you are so well-mannered, so discreet." He set a pink thumb-nail on the card. "Shall we have some of this white bean soup?"

"Monsieur vill fin' ze *potage* ver' hot," nodded Mélisse.

He gave her an edified glance across the table.

"Though I don't think I'd howl rudely to-night, were the soup coldish," he smiled. "And for fish?" Consulting the card. "How about mackerel in parsley butter? And the next dish—what shall it be?"

"*Ze cotelette de veau* is—deleecious," suggested Mélisse.

He wrote an order for cutlets. "With a vegetable casserole; and then, shall we test their roast goose and apple tart?"

"An' a *saladier*," added Mélisse.

"And pastry—that's apt to be good here. What sort of cheese do you like with your *demi-tasse?*"

"No *fromage*, monsieur, for my side of ze table. I lak' *orangeat* wiz *biscuit*."

"The only course we're divided on," sighed Charley, writing down candied orange-peel and roquefort. "In my opinion, a snack of cheese tops off any dinner. It tastes good and it aids digestion."

His gold pencil summoned the *fille de salle*, neat as a rolling-pin in starched cap and apron.

"D'you suppose the *curé* crowned her with flowers in Maytime?" laughed Charley, in an undertone—of Marthe.

He fixed a glance blithely ironical on the flower-face of his table *vis-à-vis*. Curiously: "D'you believe there lives a girl pure enough to be crowned by spring flowers, Mlle Mélisse?"

Her retort was cool. "*Mais non*."

"They say, in any village, so much piff and poff; don't they?" gibed Charley.

"So much feedle-faddle," scoffed Mélisse.

"Yet, till we die and stop chasing, we half hang to the hope of finding a snowdrop; don't we?" Charley's face was whimsical. "We half hope to find her 'round the turn of each new corner, in the twinkle of each new tootsie, in the fibs and fantasies of each newcomer!"

He blew out his cheeks, eyeing the approach of the cutlets.

Mélisse did not care to carry on the flowery topic. She drew Charley's attention to the tantalizing steam issuing from the casserole. Then she held up a pointed finger—Luce was going to play them a dinner-tune.

"He lose a limb in *la guerre*, an' he lose hisself," she explained, in a whisper.

Her fingers clasped on the table. Her eyes merged from amber to the colour of the earth in summertime, rich, moist, dark. Luce used his bow as if he were still on the village-green, a tune of gavotting lads and lassies, a rondelay of witless merriment.

Charley let the casserole cool, to applaud the jig.

"Bully stuff," he said, of the melody and the vegetables.

The goose was served, tender and flavorous.

"Um, um!" smiled the *bon vivant*, enjoying, in a second helping, the *sot-l'y-laisse*. And the apple tart! It melted in the mouth! Charley began to emulate the threadbare and thread-needle diners. He thoroughly enjoyed each dish. Over the *saladier*, he said, comfortably, "I give you my word, this is excellent fare."

Over the sweets and coffee: "May the girl who introduced us eat as delightful food all her life! Bless her for ever. Shall we smoke, Mlle. Mélisse?"

She lighted the tip of her cigarette from his, across the table.

Had *La Rosière* been less well-behaved, Charley might have misbehaved—her sparkling face was near enough to kiss. He rhapsodized, through rings of fragrant vapour.

"What a Mayblossom you are, mademoiselle! A bluet encased in ice."

He wafted a caress to her, through a circle of smoke.

Mélisse twirled the amorous smoke-ring on her pointed finger.

"I believe," said Charley, sentimentally, "that I'm falling in love with someone." He hummed a verse from a recent song-whirl:

"I'm falling in love for the millionth time,
With never a reason, and many a rhyme,
Oh, it's bliss to kiss the millionth miss,
In an airy, fairy whirl like this!"

The spinning finger of Mélisse broke the circlet of smoke.

"*Fi donc!*" she said.

"Airy fairy!" hummed Charley. His humour was expanding. The glass-topped table reflected his finger in pursuit of hers.

She put her finger in her mouth, nibbling it—should he wax over-demonstrative, she might cry, "*au secours!*" and have Maman Dragée give him a pan over the head! But—*que voulez-vous?* He was rich. An *éponseur.*

Charley threw away his half-finished cigarette.

"My car is at the curb," he told her. "Shall we go for a spin before folly-time, Mlle. Mélisse?"

Mélisse arose, with a *frou-frou* of blue and silver.

She had a reassuring glance for Maman's anxious stare, a nod for Marthe, a smile for Luce—what plenty they would enjoy in the near future, her family!

The little *danseuse* went with Charley Goddard from *La Rosière.*

He handed her into his limousine; he was humming again, "In an airy, fairy whirl like this!"

V

MÉLISSE sank into plum-coloured cushions, looking through the car-glass at the quiet section of New York.

Charley sat beside her. He was effulgent, garrulous, fat.

"Epicurean fairy," he said, "you are the ideal of my dreams, the nightingale at the end of the trail—I'd like the right to love you all the while."

He laughed at his melodious string of words.

"Your eyes!" he sighed, "your teeth! your pretty, pointed feet!"

He laid his hand on his waistcoat, somewhere in the region of his heart.

Mélisse made fun of him.

"Oh, la, la. You 'ave eet mooch dinner. You amuse me."

"Dinner?" said Charley, reproachfully. "What has that to do with it?" He shook his head. "For an ice-sprite, you have a most material soul."

A gold ring on his finger caught her drifting glance.

"Soul, monsieur?" she shrugged. "I 'ave none lef'." And, merrily—audacious nostrils tilting, eyes provocative, lips provoking—, "Let us talk of somet'ing else, of ze ride, ze night, ze nonsense—!"

"When you sparkle like that, I adore you," declared Charley.

A curve that the car took conveniently lessened the space between them.

Charley put his arm about her silvery waist.

She put his arm away.

"Icicle!" chided Charley.

"*Peut-être,*" pouted Mélisse.

The car took another curve—diminishing the space between them. Light from the globes along the avenue fell aslant his shirt-front, and her face. Her lips were red as berries!

"Temptation touch me not!" said Charley; closer.

His face beamed into hers, a sated Broadway moon, with a *farceur* in it! The electric light set his diamond shirt-studs winking. The winking diamonds!

He kissed her.

Mélisse stared at him. Her thoughts

darted about, flew back to a summer dawning:

. . . The kiss of Lothaire! His rich voice, crying, "None are so tempting as thou!" . . .

"Eef you kees me again, monsieur," —in his arms—"I t'ink I will deetes' you." Her fingers barred her lips.

"Am I detestable to you?" Charley Goddard laughed down at her, reddening.

She was silent.

Charley waxed meditative.

"You dined with me, Mlle. Mélisse. Why did you do it, if you don't like me?"

She gathered her wits together.

"'Ave I say '*bête*' to you yet, monsieur?" evenly.

"No, you haven't called me a beast—but—," smiled Charley. "Oh, well; a frosting makes the bonbon more toothsome, eh, little girl?"

Her thoughts were like birds startled by storms, disquieted, alarmed:

. . . Lothaire's voice, saying, "Going makes coming back all the sweeter, little one." . . .

She drew from Charley's arms. She set up a plummy cushion between them, like a fender.

The car rolled on.

The cushion was not removed.

"I have a suspicion," remarked Charley, at length, in a contemplative voice, "that, at some time or other, the village *curé* crowned you with roses."

Her fingers were at her temples:

. . . Maytime, and Lothaire's roses on her brow! The gentle face of the *curé!* The villagers! . . .

Charley went on talking, in a sort of jaded, jaunty monologue.

"And why," he said to her, "didn't you present me to your Mamma this evening, and to Marthe, and Luce?"

He held up a groomed finger. His eyes twinkled. "It happens, mademoiselle,"—turning her face toward him, in a shaft of light from the avenue —"that I have sometimes walked to the theatre with your brother Luce. In fact, Luce and I have chatted together; of the stars in your village; of you, *la rosière*."

He released her delicately pointed chin to pat a flash of silver in her sleeves. "You see, my dear, when a flounder likes a girl, he's hardly content to sit in an orchestra chair and gape at her. He sets to work to find out something about her. And, if you'll believe it, my little friend, he's tickled to death when he learns only good of her. Tickled to death!

"And when, mademoiselle, she withdraws from a floundering kiss—with her face paled by memories—why, confound it, it upsets him! It touches him. It gets him to wondering if he can have found that rare combination in Manhattan: pure food and a pure woman!" Charley drew a handkerchief from his pocket, and blew his nose.

The car was by now approaching her theatre.

Charley's sloping shoulders squared, in a way that denoted emotion. He took her hands in his.

"My dear," he said, sincerely, "you are delicious. Every white curve of you enchants me. I adore each point of you. Your sister is comely. Your brother is a dear boy. Your mother's cooking!" His hand went to his waistcoat, to the region of his heart.

He ventured to kiss the wedding-finger of her pointed hand.

"I can think of nothing more enjoyable than sitting at the table with you, three times a day," he smiled. "Shall we marry, Mélisse?"

The car came to a standstill before the stage-door.

Petite chandelle de glace! After dining in *La Rosière*, Charley was hers for the taking. The rich American of her avaricious dreams. She had his heart. She could have his diamonds. . . . Diamond dewdrops on freshly culled roses piled high in a donkey cart! . . .

Mélisse drew her hand from Charley's well-manicured fingers. "*Jamais!!*" she stammered. "*Nevair!*"

"Eh?" The confirmed bachelor of affirmed wealth blinked.

"*Jamais!*" She blindly reached for the car-door.

There was a touch of testiness in the way Charley found the knob of the door for her. He held it in his chubby hand. His face purpled with pique, and humour.

"So you won't marry me, after fishing for me, Mlle. Mélisse?" he queried.

She was not looking at him. Her hand was on her breast.

"Nevair," she shivered.

Charley looked at her snowflake hand, and widened the door of his car. He resumed his habitual levity, his garrulity:

"Tra-la, I see. These icy May-blossoms of the 'Follies'! They've most of them freshets of memories in their foolish breasts!" Kindly: "Skip along, blossom; I see. It may be that your Lothaire Pepin, your rose-grower —Luce has talked to me of roses— will come back to you some day. They do, in fairy tales. Dance along; and forget piggy Charley. He understands."

He clambered from the car, to assist her descent. He made her a bow.

She hung her head in stepping to the pavement.

"*Pardonnez-moi, mon ami,*" she murmured, confusedly. "*Hélas,* life ees no fairy tale. Yet—Lothaire I cannot forget. *Jamais! Jamais!*"

She left him hurriedly—a flash of blue and silver through the stage-door, *l'ancien pont des soupirs.*

Charley Goddard climbed into his car and rode away.

Mélisse pirouetted modestly in the "Follies" that night, nibbling nothing. She made a shrine of the boards, breathlessly kneeling there, in her ice-splinter ballet, in the "Follies." Her thoughts were like lost birds, winging backwards, for ever and for ever:

. . . Lothaire and summertime! Hair turned by the sun to burnished copper and skin the colour of gold roses! Sunshine! trees! love-birds! A wayside shrine. Full throats. Warm hearts. Love, on a village road, in the morning. A kiss! . . .

Mélisse did not even look to see if Charley Goddard was on the other side of the footlights.

APPLE BOUGHS

By Muna Lee

WE had an apple-tree curved for our tent,
We had wild grass heaped for our bed;
And we saw a red impossible moon
Hang like an apple overhead.

We watched the leaves change from dusk to grey;
Then the lips of the shadow brushed our brows.
And from dreamless slumber, we woke to greet
Dawn through apple boughs.

THE SUPERWOMAN

By Van Vechten Hostetter

MADGE'S arrival in hell did not create even a mild sensation. She had not supposed it would. She had expected all along to be received with condescension and compelled to fight for recognition as the peer of the most distinguished sinner. That was always the way. The wicked, like the virtuous, were always sceptical of every one's claim to glory but their own.

Well, nothing of real worth ever came easily and here Madge was, ready to fight. No doubt Messalina, Cleopatra, the Catherine set and all the rest were complacently laughing among themselves at her ambition. Let them laugh. She would show them something.

On earth Madge had wasted no time. She was satisfied with her record. Looking back, she could, to be sure, see a few golden opportunities for wickedness that had been overlooked; but then, nobody could be perfect, and she knew of no one that had packed more effective and far-reaching sin into thirty-five years than she.

A precocious child, Madge had been aided by a flower-like face in concealing her guile, and when, at the age of seven, she had made certain naïve remarks about her father and the cook, nobody but the accused had dreamed she was lying, and even they had felt guilty.

After her parents separated Madge had been put in public school. There she had stolen rich children's playthings. Poor children, of course, were immediately suspected. After tearful denials they had been searched and the missing trinkets found in their pockets, where Madge had put them. The poor children had been promptly sent to the reformatory. Not bad for a little girl scarcely nine years old.

Madge had carried on, making miserable all who came under her influence. It had been her constant purpose to emulate the most thorough-going mistresses of villainy the world had known. She had done well, considering the changed and somewhat adverse conditions that were beyond her control. She could truthfully say that she had never been faithful to anyone, which was more than the others could do. She had died of sheer delight at the spectacle of two life-long bosom friends, both honourable gentlemen, doing each other to death, each under the delusion that he was safeguarding her long defunct honour.

Madge, meditating upon her accomplishments, took heart of grace. Yes, she would show these people something.

Hell was run on the general plan of American society. After all, why not? Madge was suited. Unless she was greatly mistaken she had acquired some finesse at Newport and Palm Beach that would cause her to be taken somewhat seriously before the passing of many days.

Her confident predictions were realized. Within six months she was the recognized leader of the younger set. In a year she was admitted to be a lady without an equal in wickedness. She had the nether world convinced that Anne Boleyn had only been a little indiscreet and had not really deserved to lose her head; that Messalina was only a tease; that the iniquities of Catherine the Great were the fictions of a set of

press agents; that Catherine de Medici was no worse than she should be on or about August 24, 1572. Lucrezia Borgia and Cleopatra were virtually ostracized.

Nero, Attila, Henry VIII., the Louises, Gregory Orloff, and others were her devoted slaves. They were for ever tumbling over each other to make things interesting for her.

Then flashed into Madge's mind the tremendous idea.

For minutes it almost overwhelmed her.

She took caution and asked herself if her dream was sane.

Why not? She had won the wholehearted devotion of his most vicious courtiers, why should she not have that of the Devil? He had granted her a few admiring smiles. He was susceptible. What reason was there to believe he was proof against all the wiles of women? Why had no woman assailed his heart? Only because there had been no woman big and bad and courageous enough. The thing was far from impossible for her. She would marry him and as his queen would rule him and hell itself!

The next morning she called at the palace of Lucifer and was graciously received. She was beautiful and richly gowned and she talked brilliantly. The following day she was received with extreme cordiality and the day still following, with unrestrained joy.

Thereafter she spent every afternoon with the Devil and dined with him every evening. At all state functions she was at his side. He made no secret of the fact that she was his favourite.

Yet not a word of love did he speak, even when they were tête-à-tête on his big throne. This annoyed Madge and presently made her miserable. It was torture to be so close to her ambition and yet find it held beyond her reach; but that was not the worst of it—for her purpose she had simulated an affection for the Devil and now she found her emotion was genuine.

He was, really, a person of remarkable charm. His manners were above criticism. He was the most polished gentleman she had ever known. And he was not unhandsome. His pictures had not done him justice. He was slender, not too tall, boyish in a way, though his eyes were cunning. Still, they were good eyes. His face was long and narrow and his small features were delicately cut. His skin was as fair and delicate as a child's. His small hands were long and the fingers tapered. When one of those hands touched her she was thrilled.

Madge did not give up hope, but her impatience and her wretchedness increased. Finally she grew desperate and threw convention and diplomacy aside.

"I love you," she said. "I've never loved before. I didn't believe I had a heart. I didn't believe I was capable of love. But I love you. Make me your wife."

The Devil smiled whimsically. When he spoke his voice was even softer than ever before.

"You know, I like you," he said; "I like you so much that I would make you my wife in a minute—if I could—but it's impossible—quite."

He sighed.

"Impossible?" repeated Madge incredulously. "Impossible? Why?"

"Promise me," said the Devil, "you'll never tell a soul if I tell you why."

"I promise," Madge said dully.

"I can never marry you," the Devil said, drawing her close to him and whispering in her ear, "because I, too, am a woman!"

THE SISTERS

By L. M. Hussey

I

RUTH stared at the clock in sincere surprise. It was now after eleven and Helen had not come home.

For some time she had felt that it was late, but a preoccupation with several long letters had prevented her from learning the exact hour.

Helen's absence was remarkable. Now she had been away more than three hours. Early in the evening she had suggested a walk, but Ruth was tired; she wanted to write letters; her sister went out alone. It seemed impossible that she could be wandering about so long, without any aim.

Ruth walked through the hall and out to the porch of their flat. She leaned over the railing and looked up and down the street.

A young man and a girl, intimately close, strolled down the street and entered one of the doors below; after their passage the street was empty.

It was much cooler now; the air was stirred by a breeze that blew against the watcher's cheeks, stirred in her sparse hair and seemed to whisper incomprehensible words that spoke tantalizingly of the mysterious night. For a moment she forgot her purpose on the porch.

She leaned more heavily on the railing; her body drooped a little and in deep inspirations she breathed the night air slowly. An accustomed melancholy settled vaguely upon her spirits.

To a certain degree the quiet darkness of the street and the silent stir of the air intoxicated her, filling her consciousness with the suggestion of enchantments that might come at such an hour, out of the darkness, achieving a magic suddenness of sweet enactment at the end of a drab day. At this moment, as in other similar moments, the dolorous quality of her mood was intermixed with the allure of hope.

Her preoccupation was destroyed by the noise of footsteps down below, on the sidewalk. Glancing quickly in the direction of the sound, she was relieved by the sight of Helen's figure, walking briskly toward the house.

She turned and entered the hall again, where she stood, peering down the stairs until she saw her sister's figure outlined against the glass panel of the front door.

Then she pressed a button on the wall; the mechanism clicked rapidly in the lock below; Helen pushed the door open and ran upstairs.

"Where in the world—?" began Ruth.

She paused abruptly; the expression in Helen's face acted upon her as if it were a detaining spell. Her eyes were astoundingly wide and bright and a film seemed to lay over them like the first intimation of tears. Yet it was not a tearful film, unless it could be the premonitory and persistent moisture of an exulting delight.

Helen was smiling, almost simpering the curves of her lips came and went tremulously. She looked about eagerly, past Ruth down the short length of the hall, as if her eyes sought some unexpected stranger in the place. One of her hands played nervously at the edge of her blouse. Ruth stared, astonished at the curious vivacity of her appearance.

"Wait till I tell you, dear!" she exclaimed.

She half ran through the hall and turned in at her room; Ruth followed her in bewilderment and curiosity. She paused only to snap on the electric light and then hurried to her mirror.

Leaning over the dressing-table, she brought her face close to the glass and stared at her reflected image, as if it were a new countenance miraculously replacing the familiar contours of the old.

Ruth stood behind her, her eyes rounded by surprise, her mouth dropping open with her astonishment. The mirror returned both their faces in a faithful reproduction.

Although different in type, they revealed a certain resemblance. Both possessed the same small, pallid blue eyes; both were inadequately crowned by sparse coils of straw-coloured hair. But Helen was the plump one. Her figure bulged out in indefinite, ample curves; her face was round, her nose amorphous. She was the foil for her sister, whose lean figure seemed taller by the effect of her thinness. And neither was very young.

Helen abandoned her eager scrutiny and turned from the mirror. Her face was glowing with her excited smile. She seemed unable, save for brief moments, to meet Ruth's searching gaze; she dropped her eyes; she simpered again.

"Oh, dearie!" she exclaimed. "I've had a real adventure. I met the most gentlemanly man . . ."

"What!"

"Yes, indeed. Really. An adventure. I didn't expect any such thing at all. It makes me feel so romantic!"

She was suddenly voluble and confiding.

She related her experiences in swiftly spoken sentences, punctuated by her astonishingly shy smiles, her sudden blushes, her dropped eyes.

As she talked she fumbled with the edges of her dress, twisting the fabric between her fingers as if her speech were inadequate to the eagerness of her revealing urge.

She had gone out for a walk, just as she had intended. It was warmer than she had realized and she soon found walking unpleasant. Before she had gone far, she turned back to return to the apartment. A few squares away she paused in a little crowd that had collected around a team near the curb; the horse had fallen with the heat and several men were making efforts to revive it.

She was about to go on when the animal suddenly struggled to his feet; the crowd surged back and a man in front of her stumbled against her and nearly lost his footing; she seized his arm impulsively and saved him from a fall. He turned at once and thanked her. This was the first glimpse she had had of his face.

His countenance was most agreeable; not especially young, but she disavowed any liking for really young men. What she liked about his face was its expression of shyness, his shy smile, his gentle eyes.

"That was awfully good of you," he murmured. "Certainly I would have fallen if you hadn't caught my arm in time."

His voice was low and at the same time his words were uttered with so much hesitancy that she did not feel at all embarrassed.

"The horse got up so quick . . ." she said.

"Yes . . . I didn't expect . . ."

The crowd was beginning to move away, but they stood there on the pavement, looking at each other, feeling that something more ought to be said.

Helen felt her heart beating rapidly. Already the sense of an adventure was coming to her. She knew that her cheeks were flushing; she was glad of the concealing darkness.

Then, with a burst of courage that did not seem at all offensive, he asked her where she was going.

"Oh, nowhere," she said.

"Just out for a walk?"

"Yes—it was so hot at home . . ."

"The same with me," he told her. "I had nothing particular to do."

These simple confessions created, with the utmost naturalness, a certain subtle, yet mutually admitted, bond of intimacy. The man hesitated a moment, looked up and down the street, fumbled with his tie, put a hand into his trousers pocket and drew it out again.

"If you don't want to get home just yet," he said, "couldn't we . . . couldn't we go somewhere together . . . a moving picture or something?"

She knew there was no possible danger with him. His gentlemanliness had been apparent in his first glance, his first word, his initial gesture of thanks. Already she felt a complete confidence in him and with this was mingled a fluttering excitement and an inward thankfulness to the fortunes of chance that had brought her this delighting opportunity. She consented immediately and boldly slipped her arm beneath his own.

They walked away together and when they came to a moving picture theatre they went in.

At this point in her story Helen laughed demurely.

"We didn't see much of the picture," she said.

They were too occupied with the business of getting acquainted.

"We seemed just like old friends," said Helen.

Her sister scowled a little.

Helen did not notice this sign of an accumulating disapproval and she continued her narration eagerly.

They told each other the interesting, fundamental facts about themselves. Neither was married.

"You can't trust men," Helen said.

He agreed and she felt no sense of insincerity; in that moment it seemed to her that she had in the past renounced men, men that desired her, because they were untrustworthy, because they were deceiving.

He admitted that he was lonely: she had put a question to him.

"After all," he said, "a human being does need a sympathetic companion."

These words sent a suffused warmth over Helen's body and in a clairvoyant, enticing flash she saw herself in this alluring rôle; *herself* the companion, the affectionate companion. . . .

Her concluding words were delivered to Ruth like a bomb.

"And he's coming here to see me tomorrow evening!" she exclaimed.

Now she had the courage to meet Ruth's eyes and the glance she received was one of sternness and surprise.

"Well!" Ruth said. "This is very remarkable."

"What is the matter with you?"

"I hardly expected—" began Ruth.

"Oh, don't be angry, dear! Don't start to say that I shouldn't have talked to him. Wait till you see him. You'll admit that he's a gentleman. You'll like him too!"

II

As Ruth retired to her own room, the sternness of her features began to relax. A sense of the miraculousness of life was coming to her, lightening her spirits, arousing vague visions in her mind. Her mood took on some of the quality that had possessed it during those moments on the porch, when the mysterious night-wind had stirred in her hair, bringing her suggestive reminiscences of the adventurous streets, the unknown happenings of the night, the allure of the hours in prospect. Helen had found a man! He had come to her in the way one dreamed of their coming, romantically, suddenly, and without a definite expectation.

The luck of her sister seemed now a promise for herself. She did not light the light in her room; the darkness was more consonant with her emotions. She smiled as she slipped her dress from her shoulders. A scarcely comprehended warmth tingled her senses. As she lay down the pillow seemed to caress her face, like the touch of an intimate hand.

She slept longer than usual and when she arose the next morning Helen had already left for work. She prepared

her breakfast and set about her simple, usual duties; by noon she had gone over the apartment and was finished until it was time to prepare dinner.

The hours had passed with a curious remoteness; she was half in a dream. This day, and the days to follow, arrayed themselves before her in garments of a new significance, of an unusual expectancy. She often thought of the anticipated visitor. It half seemed that he was not only coming to see Helen, but to see her also; at least he brought her a promise.

Early in the afternoon she went out, to buy what was necessary for the evening meal. She walked the streets with a fresh eagerness, giving little glances about her, drawing in a quick breath as some agreeable man would pass close to her; any one of these might speak to her there! Such things happened; her own sister was the witness!

When Helen returned in the evening they held an eager conversation over what to wear. Helen decided on her pink dress and this was pleasing to Ruth, who held the secret opinion that the dress was not becoming.

"And what shall *I* wear?" Ruth asked.

Helen looked at her in a momentary surprise; the query seemed unnecessary and remote.

"Oh . . . anything . . ." she said.

The words brought a chill to Ruth, and a more exact appreciation of values. Anything—of course. He was not coming to see *her*, after all. It was not her man. During dinner she became silent; now and again she found herself staring down at her plate in immobility, forgetful of the food before her. A peculiar resentment and an accompanying melancholy were stealing into her heart.

Helen hurried through the meal and ran into her room. As she took the dishes into the kitchen, Ruth could hear her there, opening and closing the closet door, pulling out the drawers of her bureau, rattling the comb and brush on her dressing-table. The sounds were somehow inimical, distinctly unpleasant.

Finally, stacking up the dishes, she walked out into the hall and entered her own room. All her expectancy was gone; she dressed languidly, pausing to stare at herself in the mirror and yet not seeing her reflection, standing motionless in the room in moments of inanition, biting her thin lips as she searched for her clothes. When the bell rang she was not yet dressed.

She heard Helen run out into the hall and press the button on the wall. A moment later someone ascended the stairs. There was a murmur of voices in greeting: her sister's voice and the voice of a man. Then her eagerness was suddenly returned to her. She began to smooth her hair with swift strokes of the brush. He had really materialized. Perhaps some other evening he would bring one of his friends to meet her!

When she was ready she walked toward the parlour with a gracious smile on her inadequate lips. She approached softly and evidently they had not heard her coming, for both of them turned toward her abruptly as she parted the curtains pendant over the door. For a second they stared at her. They were seated intimately on the sofa and Helen's hand lay palm upward in the enclosing fingers of the stranger. The second of embarrassed immobility passed; Helen withdrew her hand; the pair stood up simultaneously.

"Mr. Dimsdale," said Helen, "this is my sister."

She smiled and blushed in the same moment.

"Dear," she said sweetly, "Mr. Dimsdale knows how to tell fortunes; he was just telling mine!"

Ruth smiled, but perversely enough, her inner feelings were suddenly not those of smiling. She believed her sister lied. They had simply been holding hands. Or, if the superficial truth had been spoken, their real intent was as she surmised. And the revelation of this sudden intimacy irritated her with an extraordinary persistence.

She scrutinized the fellow on the sofa with searching eyes. Certainly he was

not young; his hair was already a little grey; there were wrinkles around his eyes.

She found herself disliking him. She objected to his pallid voice, to his hesitant manner, to the somewhat tremulous way in which he smiled.

Feeling herself entirely unwanted there, she did not remain long in the room. She excused herself and shook hands with Helen's new friend. As she left she congratulated herself that he did not belong to her. Yet her mood was one of pronounced depression.

It was impossible to remain in the apartment. A strangely irritating murmur came out from the parlour like a singularly malevolent and persistent torture. It entered into her ears in a diabolic insistence; she tried to read and the small, murmurous sound dominated the printed words. At last she hurried through the hall and ran down the stairs, like one escaping from a loathsome presence.

She spent several hours frowning at a moving picture screen, attending very little of the entertainment.

Returning home, she glanced up at the parlour window and the light was still burning.

For a few seconds she hesitated, but there was nowhere to go. In despair she entered the house again and walked directly to her room.

They were talking very little now. Somehow, this was even more maddening than the irritation of their low-voiced words. Undressing with brusque gestures, she snapped off the light and threw herself on the bed. An immense period of time seemed to pass before she heard the voices again, this time in the hall; there was a silent moment and the sound of someone descending the steps came to her ears. At last he was going!

A second later she heard her sister enter her room. She closed her eyes, pretending sleep. The light flashed on; Helen's shadow fell over her face. She was too nervous to maintain the pretence. She opened her eyes.

"Well, has he gone?" she asked.

Helen ignored the unfriendly intonation of her question.

"Isn't he dear?" she asked. "Don't you like him?"

Ruth rose up in the bed with a sudden jerk, as if a concealed spring had pulled her to a sitting posture.

"Like him!" she exclaimed, bitterly. "What! That old man!"

For just an instant Helen's face flushed with her immediate anger; her lips trembled with retorting words; but her expression changed, her eyelids narrowed a little; a faint, sardonic smile began to turn the corners of her lips.

And then, as if from the certainty of her inner understanding, as if from the scornful knowledge of those causes that aroused her sister's jealous words, she laughed. Her maddening chuckles seemed to bathe the one on the bed in a stream of icy and appalling sound. Without a word she ran out of the room, and her laugh continued in the hall.

III

THE thousand trivial antagonisms that accumulate in the protracted intimacy of any two human beings blossomed into acute activity in the days that followed. Ruth experienced hours that were intolerable; all the amassed wanting, added year by year to her spirit, came urging into her mind, to plague and torment her.

Helen was for ever with her man. Night after night she heard his voice, her ears were embittered with the murmur of their intolerable conversations; late in the night, awakened from her sleep, she heard them return from an evening outside and the midnight hours were filled with the abomination of their parting words.

Her only armour was derision and disparagement, yet it was a poor defence against the simple weapon of Helen's significant and ironic smiles. For her own protection, she began at last to avoid the contemptuous sniff when Dimsdale's name was mentioned, lest the shaft of one of those merciless

smiles should wing its rending irony into the pained wanting of her heart.

Helen had grown shameless; the pair were shameless together. Their kisses resonated through the hall; their sighs were unconcealed.

Coming upon them in a careless moment of entwined arms, Ruth was inevitably outraged, and her dignity was assailed as if their amorous intimacies were gestures of pointed derision. The lines of her thin face lengthened; her lips grew more compressed; she felt as if she were the taunted witness of a profound obscenity.

The sisters no longer chattered together in the evening; there was no more pleasant, venomous gossip concerning the people of their acquaintance; now they never lowered their voices and nodded their heads significantly over this woman or that one. Helen had no time for the critical observation of others, and what were their acts she did not care.

Particularly maddening was the bitter truth that she did not even care for the thoughts of Ruth. She and the man she had discovered—they were for ever together and persistently abominable.

It was something more than two months after her first acquaintance with the fellow that Ruth was awakened late one night by a light in her room; she opened her eyes and saw her sister standing near the bed.

Helen was smiling peculiarly; there was an unusual colour in her cheeks and a certain disarming softness in her manner.

"What do you want?" Ruth asked.

For answer, Helen drew closer to the bed, leaned down and incredibly took Ruth's hand in her own. She pressed the thin fingers warmly.

"Dear," she said, "don't make me unhappy. Don't be angry with me!"

Ruth's eyes widened.

"What in the world do you want?" she questioned again. "What's the matter with you."

Helen seated herself on the edge of the bed, smiling, blushing. She still retained the captured hand, and she ran her fingers over it ingratiatingly.

"Don't grow away from me, dear," she said. "Don't forget that we're sisters."

Ruth, her astonishment augmented with this obscure behaviour, sat up in bed.

"Tell me what's happened!" she demanded.

There was a preliminary giggle from Helen.

"George and I are going to be married," she confessed.

A silence, persisting for several minutes, ensued upon this announcement.

A complexity of feelings rushed upon Ruth, too mixed, too opposing, and too inextricable to give her an instantly dominating mood. It was only after the passage of these silent moments, whilst her sister still caressed her hand, still looked down into her face with an effect of pleading, that a sudden new softness entered into her spirit like a balm. The harsh lines of her face relaxed and Helen saw the change.

"We want you to live with us," she said. "It seems to me we might as well keep this apartment right here—I'll be at home now and with two of us the work won't be anything. Oh, I'm happy! You can't imagine! He's . . . he's such a dear. . . ."

A faint return of her old scorn stirred in Ruth's mind as she heard these concluding words. But it was a scorn mitigated by pity. She bent toward Helen and kissed her cheek. After all, it would be cruel to disillusion the poor girl! What if she did imagine grotesque virtues for the impossible fellow? Life was not kind; she would learn soon enough!

That night they talked a long time together. Their old confidence and their old affection seemed to have come back. They kissed each other goodnight.

Ruth heard Helen go to her room and a sigh of contentment came to her softly through the channel of the narrow hall. She leaned back on the pillow and closed her eyes.

As on the evening when she had first learned of Helen's adventure, alluring, vague visions passed before her eager eyes. Even Helen had captured a man! She found a deep caressing assurance in that unexpected fact. What a promise for herself!

IV

THEY were married a month later and Ruth had been very busy engineering the arrangements and conducting the actual details that fell to her part on the day itself. Their honeymoon was to be deferred until late in the Fall, for then Dimsdale found he would have more time. So there were three living in the apartment immediately.

The first week or two Ruth pitied them; they were so absurd together. It afforded her a scornful amusement to come upon her sister in the arms of this old man; he was not the man that she would find.

But already even her amusement and even her scorn were not totally free from a measure of her former irritation. Nevertheless, the streets were magic places for her again. Nearly every night she walked out, intoxicated with the thousand unknown chances that lay before her.

She visited the moving picture theatres and when a man sat down beside her she felt warm little currents run to the ends of her fingers; unluckily no one of them ever spoke to her, or touched her hand in the dark.

She sought the public parks, chose the dark quarters, sat on the benches that were shaded by shrubs and trees, yet somehow she always sat alone.

After such evenings it was becoming increasingly unpleasant to go home. She was sure to happen upon the idiot pair in a cooing embrace; once, as she opened the front door she almost screamed with a sharp, sudden anger, as the sound of a loud kiss greeted her ears.

But one night she almost had an adventure. She was standing on a street corner when a car stopped and several passengers stepped out. She glanced up at the car; her eyes swept languidly along the row of heads at the windows to become focussed upon the face of a man that was looking at her. The eyes of the two met. And then, just as the car started, the man smiled, smiled at her, smiled at Ruth standing on the corner. At first she did not realize the significance of his act and she continued only to stare. Before her startled apprehensions could shape her lips to the returning of his smile, the car had swept him from her vision.

She turned and she watched the conveyance disappear with a fast beating at her heart. It did not stop at the next corner; no one got off to come back and find her. A damp chill settled over her spirits. She understood. If she had only returned his smile!

Ruth went slowly back to the apartment in the grip of a deep depression. It seemed to her that her chance, infinitely desired, long awaited, had come —and she had let it pass.

Opening the door of the apartment, she ascended the stairs slowly, with dragging steps. A light came out into the hall from the room that Helen and her husband occupied. The door was open and as she passed it, Ruth glanced in.

The pair were sitting close together in two intimate chairs. Dimsdale was reading Helen a story out of a magazine. Her head rested on his shoulder, his free arm was around her waist. And in that moment Ruth knew that this sight, that these two, with the eternal seeing of their affection, was at last and finally intolerable!

She walked on to her room with a trembling tenseness in all her muscles.

It was a long time before she undressed for bed. When she at last turned out the light, and lay down on the bed, she did not close her eyes, but stared up into the darkness. Ghosts of defeat seemed to move there, to mock her, to grin at her. They took on faces, the abominable faces of her sister and her man, and these faces grew close to each other and their phantom hands

caressed each other. Biting her thin lips, the woman on the bed pressed her open eyes into the pillow to shut out these creatures of her despair.

She must have slept at last for she suddenly found that it was morning. The sun was shining directly into her eyes and she realized that it was late. There was no sound in the flat. Helen must have gone out.

The thought of her sister, coming back to her after the hours of dreamless oblivion, embittered these early waking moments.

A decision she had come to, the decision she had reiterated in her mind before ever she had lain down in the bed, returned to her now with all its original force.

She sprang up suddenly. At least it was lucky that Helen was not there. She felt incapable of seeing that intolerably amorous face again, facing the mockery of those softened eyes, the sarcasm of those lips that smiled in remembrance, the irony of the gestures that were like maddening caresses. With a quickened coming and going of her breath, she dressed in nervous haste.

Into a small grip she packed only such things as were of immediate necessity. All the rest could be sent for. She wrote no note of explanation. She put on her hat, she thrust her arms into a light coat and glancing into her handbag to see that her money was there, she grasped the satchel and walked quickly into the hall.

For an instant she stared apprehensively down the stairs, fearing that Helen might at that moment be at the door: that would mean a delay. And it seemed impossible to her spirit that another hour could be passed within the mocking confines of those familiar walls.

Running down the steps she opened the door, crossed the porch and was on the street. Her first concern was to find a room, but for a moment she forgot that necessity.

Something in the cool morning air soothed her. Like the night wind, it appeared to whisper a promise in her ears. She was free!

She smiled grimly to herself and her mind began to offer rational explanation of her flight.

"Of course," she whispered. "Who could blame me? Nobody could endure such an atmosphere, all that foolishness, such absurdity. They are an impossible pair. Helen is the most impossible woman in the world!"

She reiterated this final thought as she walked along the street. Helen was wholly impossible. If *she* had found a man, *anybody* could!

At the corner she passed without observing a young fellow leaning idly against the wall of a house. He looked after her and his momentary glimpse of her face made him smile. But following upon the heedlessness of his smile, that was the product of his unthinking youth, another and a curious emotion came to him suddenly.

It seemed to him then that in the walk of this unknown old maid, in her attitude, in the slope of her shoulders, in the angular motions of her arms, there was a quality that was vaguely, indescribably, yet profoundly pathetic.

THE best part of a love affair, to a woman, is the sad part after it is all over. A woman always enjoys the coroner's inquest more than the murder.

THAT SECOND MAN

By S. N. Behrman

". . . for, together with, and, as it were behind, so much pleasurable emotion, there is always that other strange second man in me, calm, critical, observant, unmoved, blasé, odious."—LORD LEIGHTON: *Letter to his sister.*

I

AS Clark Storrey rang the bell of Courtney's narrow marble house he thought with pleasure of the mournful expression with which, he knew, Courtney would greet him. When Courtney was gay Storrey did not find him amusing but in his fits of depression—lately very frequent with him—there was something, to Storrey, almost jocund. The sag in his plump, pasty cheeks, the little whine that crept into his voice, the limp droop of his big body—the spectacle of Courtney as a forlorn lover, a plump Malvolio, appealed to Storrey's sense of humour, but, more piquantly, to a less amiable sense.

The pleasure he derived from the contemplation of Courtney in his present condition, his own rôle of splendid fellow and good friend, forced him to dissimulate but it lost little of its zest on this account. To think that Courtney—who was a first-rate scientist, master of a hidden vivid world which he, Storrey, could not enter—was at the mercy of an emotion which made him as abjectly ridiculous as any clerk mooning over a post-card picture of an actress! It vindicated a notion he had long harboured that Courtney, despite his renown, was essentially quite commonplace. The notion of cold superiority that people entertained about him was a myth that Monica had completely melted.

That was pleasing to Storrey, who had always a bit envied and rather despised him. And it was also pleasing to him that before him alone of all people, Courtney made no effort to hide his absurd frailty.

Courtney's telegram had read:

"Must see you at once. Courtney."

So, although he was having a good time at the Seldens' house-party, he had decided to come in, especially as pretty Mrs. Morton had volunteered to motor him to town. Courtney must be in a bad way to send him a wire like that; evidently Monica had been unusually definite with him this time . . . He hoped not too definite; Courtney mustn't be frightened off. But he felt confident he could patch things up; he smiled again at the thought of how easy it would be for him to restore Courtney's confidence. . . .

As he opened the door of the gloomy study his smile disappeared; he advanced into the room wearing an expression of grave concern.

"Just got your wire . . ."

Courtney gave him a limp hand and said nothing.

"I was afraid you might be ill—"

"It's Monica. She's refused me."

"Nonsense!"

"She has, I tell you. Point blank."

"You asked her to marry you?"

"I offered her everything—put my life at her feet, my work—" Courtney mopped his brow with a handkerchief he had in his hand.

"I guess I'd better try to forget her," he said miserably.

"Nonsense!" repeated Storrey cheerfully. "But tell me why. Why did she refuse you?"

His voice sounded as though he were quite surprised and not a little indignant.

Courtney made a helpless gesture.

"Doesn't love me."

"Does she love someone else?"

"That's the worst of it. She does."

"Who?"

"Wouldn't tell me. Do you know who it is?"

"Yes. It's no one. It's a lie. She doesn't love anyone."

"What makes you think so?" Eagerness leaped back into his voice and eyes.

Storrey improvised reasons . . . He enjoyed the scene: Courtney slumped in a high-backed chair looking very pale and sickly as though he were suffering from indigestion, the long table covered with neatly ordered piles of scientific journals from nearly every country in Europe, abstruse journals filled with curiously patterned figure-formulas covering whole pages.

But Courtney refused to believe, refused to be comforted. Finally Storrey, unable to resist the temptation to be ever so little malicious, said soothingly:

"After all, you have your science, old man."

Courtney responded magnificently to the prod: he turned haggard eyes at Storrey.

"Science! You think science means anything to me now! When I've lost her! I tell you I can't work since I've known her—I can't work. The books that formerly fascinated me, my researches—nothing matters to me now. When I start to do anything and get thinking of her I can't go on. I—I—get a headache," he finished miserably.

Storrey liked to hear Courtney denounce his profession in this way. What an illusion this was of the cold mastery of scientific men! They were as helpless as babies . .

"Of course," said Storrey after a moment, "this is all nonsense. If you want her, really want her, you can get her."

"That's what you always say. You keep telling me that. But it's not true—"

Storrey lit a cigarette.

"No doubt about it. Not in the least—"

Storrey's tone carried conviction. In spite of all Monica had said to him, Courtney felt slightly better already. He began to lift his head.

"But she told me," he began, "last night—"

"A mere child," said Storrey with finality. "Doesn't in the least know what she wants. Won't till after she's married. That's up to you."

"But she's not attracted to me—"

"She doesn't understand you. She has no appreciation of your intellectual gifts."

"It's true. Prohelium means nothing to her."

Prohelium was the name of the new element Courtney had discovered.

"You must make it mean something to her. You must teach her to see how wonderful it is to widen the boundaries of knowledge, the deep mystery and elusiveness of the things you work with, the marvellous delicacy of your experiments. . . ."

Courtney sighed heavily.

"If I could only talk like you, Storrey!"

"Talk! That's it—talk! By their sensitiveness to mere words women demonstrate their intellectual inferiority—and their right to the vote."

"If she only understood me—as you do!"

"My dear chap—she shall be made to."

"How?"

Storrey lit another cigarette.

"How?" repeated Courtney tensely.

Storrey slid forward comfortably in the dark leather chair till he seemed to be resting on the tip of his spine—a pose, he had read, often assumed by Arthur Balfour.

"Maternal pressure," he replied. "I'll wager you anything a poor poet can pay that Mrs. Gray doesn't know Monica's refused you."

"What if she did?"

"She'd raise Cain. You see Graymère—no pun intended, old chap—is desperately afraid—of guess what?"

"What?"

"That Monica will marry *me!*"

Courtney said nothing. But his face went a shade greyer. His plump cheeks hung like dew-laps.

"Of course you see how absurd it is. Monica and I—"

"I wonder you don't marry her," said Courtney a bit breathlessly. "She likes you. She likes you better than me, that's plain. Courtney's voice was not without a touch of bitterness.

"Nonsense. She doesn't — really. Fancy my being married to Monica! She'd leave me in six months. By which time I should certainly have left her. Monica couldn't stand the poverty of my ménage and," he laughed bitterly, "neither could I."

"It's strange you're not in love with Monica."

"There speaks the eternal lover. I think it strange you *are* in love with her. She's pretty—I grant you that. But—Great Heavens, man—so young!"

"She is young," said Courtney softly. His voice sounded suddenly like a far, gentle echo.

"And so full of spirits!"

"Isn't she!"

"Her laughter gets on my nerves. Like the constant ringing of chimes."

"Yes," said Courtney. "It is like chimes."

There was a silence.

Courtney seemed lost in tender reverie.

Storrey broke into it.

"That's the thing to do," he said. "There's no doubt of it."

"What is?"

"Monica's stepmother must be persuaded that *I* want to marry Monica. She'll never rest then until Monica is married to you."

"What makes you think so?" asked Courtney doubtfully.

"No doubt about it. The old lady is cracked about the idea of having you for a stepson-in-law. Oh, it's not your scientific eminence. It's not even your family, though of course that has something to do with it. It's your money, my friend, your lucre, your multitudinous boodle—"

Courtney lifted a deprecating hand.

"That's what it is, old man. The Grays are mighty hard up—Monica's been dressing shamefully of late."

"She looks better—" said Courtney truculently.

"I know, old man. Niftier in gingham than a fine lady in velvet. How extraordinary, Courtney, that a chit of a girl like Monica can make a man of your eminence talk like a hack writer!"

"I don't like you to talk about Monica that way."

"Why not? She is an impudent minx, isn't she, shallow as a platter? Her lack of appreciation of you proves that."

"She's young. I sometimes think I'm too old for her," he said pathetically.

"You're only thirty-six."

"She's twenty-two. But it's not that alone. She's so gay, full of fun. I can't prattle, Storrey. I don't follow her small talk . . ."

"I don't wonder. Her talk is not small. It is infinitesimal. Your microscopic training should help you—"

"I don't do the things she likes, dance, play tennis—you know—"

"You're not a jazz figure, Courtney," admitted Storrey judiciously. "But you'd better marry her. If you don't she'll run away with a tenor or somebody."

"I wish to Heaven I could marry her," groaned Courtney.

"You shall. I'll begin showering attentions on Monica immediately. Poor Mrs. Gray. She'll be frightened to death."

"You're sure about this, Storrey?"

"No doubt of it."

"But if Monica doesn't love me!

She told me last night she didn't—never could."

"Just marry her. She'll change her mind."

Courtney rose.

"You know, Storrey," he said, "I used to think—when I thought about it—not often, you understand, until I met Monica—that I'd never marry unless the woman wanted me as much as I wanted her. But that was before I wanted any woman—as I want Monica. I'd marry her on any terms, Storrey. You understand?"

"Of course I understand, old fellow. And you shall. Mighty good thing for Monica, too."

"You really think so?"

"You have only to persist. You'll win her, as the military men say, by attrition. I've got to run now, old man—keep the pot boiling—"

"Forgive me for taking you away from the Seldens. But I just had to see you."

"That's all right, old boy. I was glad of an excuse to get away. Awful bore."

"You always make it so easy for your friends to impose on you," said Courtney earnestly. "No wonder everybody's crazy about you . . ."

II

Storrey left Courtney's house in singularly good humour. He did not turn down-town, but cut across the avenue into Central Park. He wanted to be out in the cool sunshine, dallying pleasantly with his thoughts.

He walked along buoyantly, swinging his stick, a smile playing about his lips. He was thinking of Courtney's complete and almost pathetic reliance upon him: this man who possessed a knowledge and a skill, a sensitiveness to the hidden forces of nature, that Courtney could not help admiring . . . Courtney's discovery had brought him the highest fame in scientific circles, he was elected an honorary F.R.S. in England and had even been mentioned for the Nobel prize . . . And with all this Courtney had inherited an immense fortune from his father.

Courtney had met Monica at a house-party to which his mother had dragged him, and the man of science had fallen hopelessly in love at first sight with the beautiful, golden-haired girl, not, Storrey reflected, as a man of the world falls in love, with a certain genial deprecation of his irrationality, but as an awkward schoolboy falls in love.

In Monica's presence Courtney would become tongue-tied; he could do nothing but silently register adoration. . . . He would sit dumbly staring at her; once when the three of them were having tea together Monica asked Courtney whether he was trying to hypnotize her . . . She took a certain delight in torturing him; she was always unnecessarily risqué in his presence, would talk of having "affairs" with the blithe ingenuousness of a child prattling of storks.

"When are you and I going to have an affair, Storrey?" she would ask. "You're awfully slow about it . . ."

Her virginal beauty made her audacities irresistibly piquant, but they hurt Courtney so that he often begged her to stop . . . An avowed materialist, Courtney professed the belief that creation was the result of a fortuitous and not altogether happy combination of circumstances.

"A slight change in the temperature," he was fond of quoting, "and we should have been at the mercy of the ants."

Latterly Storrey had twitted him with his conservatism in the field of morals; was it really so important that Monica should make a fetish of monogamy in view of the Creator's carelessness about more fundamental things?

But Courtney had not pursued the subject, reiterating stubbornly:

"I don't like her to talk that way. Of course I know she wouldn't do anything—well—you know—wrong. She couldn't. She's too pure, too good. But I don't like her to talk that way."

Nevertheless Monica kept on talking that way and Storrey enjoyed Courtney's discomfiture as much as she did. . . . Storrey detested this Puritanism in Courtney; he knew it was the instinct for exclusive possession that made him want to forbid Monica the sharing of even verbal intimacies with others. . . . The girl he wanted for himself must be "as chaste as ice, as pure as snow." . . . It made Storrey indignant to think of it; what right had Courtney to desire for himself alone this beautiful creature full of high spirits and laughter—this desiccated thinking-machine, as intelligent as a mole inside his scientific burrow, but quite helpless and uninteresting once out of it? . . .

Storrey's vindictiveness was partly the result of his envy at Courtney's distinctions, the place he had won for himself in the world: actually he knew that Courtney's activities were not mole-like, but the result of thought-processes as beautifully crystalline as a poem by George Meredith. Storrey's mind was not as superficial as his life and work: which was his tragedy.

The truth was that in an obscure way he was jealous of Courtney: jealous of the place he had won for himself in the intellectual world, jealous of his money, jealous of the fact that he would marry Monica. For of course he would marry Monica. There was no way out of it for her—unless he himself married her . . .

For a moment he toyed with that temptation, the temptation of taking her away from Courtney. Monica was lovely—and really a dear. Storrey liked her better, after all, than any girl he knew. She never really got on his nerves: when she began to bore him she would always know it and say:

"All right, Storrey, I'm leaving."

Moreover there was something quite brave and fine about Monica; Storrey knew that, too. She had been going the pace rather swiftly of late, but chiefly because there was nothing else for her to do.

"We're too poor to refuse invitations, mother and I," she had said to him one day.

And another time, when she described the antics of a gay party she had attended:

"I'd have done anything that night. An antidote to the Genesis-man. He'd spent the afternoon with me."

The sobriquet had been applied to Courtney by Monica after his first attempt to initiate her into modern scientific theories of evolution. He had asked her how she thought it all began and she had replied innocently with the orthodox recital culminating in the Garden of Eve. Courtney, who had taken her quite seriously, brushed away the myth with indulgent superiority and devoted a half-hour to the nebular theory.

"So you see, Monica," he had said in conclusion, "it's not true what you've read in the Bible."

"But I like the Bible ever so much better," she had answered quickly; "there's a girl like me in it . . ."

Storrey's smile, which had disappeared as he thought of Courtney's unapproachable eminence, returned as he recalled this recital. She was a demure little witch! It might be the best thing he could do, after all, to marry Monica. He would settle down, quit this awful business of pretending to be something he wasn't, "a snapper up of unconsidered trifles," quit wrapping banal ideas in adroitly turned verse, and get down to brass tacks artistically and actually . . .

He was sick of being tame cat to half the people in New York, sick of playing the good fellow to people he despised . . .

But a moment's consideration and he banished the thought. It was too late to change. He should lead exactly the same sort of life if he married Monica as he led now. He would probably be unfaithful and Monica would probably be jealous . . . No, it was better to continue in his present rôle in life, a spectator who occasionally manipulated a few strings . . .

It would be interesting after all to

see Monica and Courtney married. An odd couple. Monica would be bored to death. What would be her revenge?

He repeated the question to himself. . . . His smile deepened.

"How funny!" he exclaimed inwardly. "Poor old Courtney. . . !"

III

When he got to his rooms he found a telephone message from Monica. He was not surprised. The message said: "Very important." That, too, was a cry for help; the second he had received that day. How simple people were, how helpless! they could be turned as easily as a rhyme . . . Of course Monica had called him up to tell him that she had refused Courtney, that she had foolishly told her mother about it, that there had been a volcanic scene . . . She wanted to get support from him to help her through the crisis. Poor Monica. She would have to succumb . . . He thought for a moment of calling her, but decided to wait till she called him again.

He sat down in a great easy chair, pushed a specially prepared arm around so that it made a broad wooden bridge over his knees, reached for a pad and fountain pen and began to write.

He sat slumped down in the chair—he could adjust the angle of the impromptu desk by turning a screw on the side. He always wrote this way; in the same position he assumed when he smoked his after-dinner cigar.

"I wonder if I'd do better work if I really had to earn a living by this stuff," he asked himself. "Probably I'd do better work. Or perhaps I'd just turn out a lot more of the same stuff . . ."

Very comfortably Storrey began to write . . . a faint smile hovering about his lips as he toyed with the words. . . . A few nights before, at a dance at the Seldens', he had taken a walk in the moonlight with a girl; they had been dancing and he asked her to go outside with him. They stepped out through the open French windows, crossed the lawn, and walked down a narrow path between high poplars, with the stars quite close, and the moon showing between them . . .

It was a most curious moon, red-bronze in colour, wafer-thin, exquisitely curved, like a tiny scimitar, a shaving of a moon. God, Courtney had said, must be a curious person to fashion such a moon, a butcher with artistic leanings. Or was He an artist suffering from a sadistic atavism? Which did she think? The girl thought it was slightly chilly and hadn't they better go back to the ball-room?

They went back to the ball-room. . . . Storrey put the walk and the talk into a poem. While writing he struck off several figures that rather pleased him: one was that the tree-tops looked like hedges in the sky between which the stars grew like buttercups. There was a hint of nostalgia, the wavering suggestion of sensuousness as the man and the girl stood for a moment on the brink of understanding, then the sophisticated monologue on the moon breaking the spell! At the end the usual ironic fillip: the mask of convention drawn on with the white gloves, a polite request for a waltz from an ancient dowager . . .

Storrey played with his ideas lazily, pared them off, tucked them in. He had written that poem a good many times before. And, when he had nearly finished modelling it, the telephone rang.

Storrey was glad. The interruption was welcome. He had had enough of creation. He reached out and took the 'phone from the tabouret. Monica's voice sounded strained, a bit breathless.

"Hello, kiddie!" he said heartily.

She reproached him for not responding to her message.

"Is it really so important?" he asked.

"Very. I've simply *got* to see you, Storrey."

They made a luncheon engagement. He got together the written sheets and put them into a drawer. He was pleased that he had done some work and that he was going to see Monica.

There had been a gravity in her voice to-day that was quite unusual for her and quite appealing. She must really be upset at the idea of marrying Courtney. One couldn't exactly blame her; Courtney would be for ever filling her ears with halting expositions of scientific theory, not because he was interested in her mental development, but that she might have the background to appreciate the splendour of his achievement.

It was absurd, thought Storrey, to think that scientists were less egoists than artists. Their deeper consciousness of the tragic insignificance of man, of the feebleness of his cry amid the vast solitudes of time and space, did not mitigate the tensity of their appetites and vanities. Nor were their minds different from other people's: they were reputed more rational because, since the problems they attack take longer to solve, they have less leisure for the gratification of instinct.

He met Monica in the lounge just off the lobby of the Ritz. Storrey's income was small enough to require husbanding, but he never economized on food. Dining at smart houses had sharpened an instinctive epicureanism. Besides, he liked to be seen at the right places. But to-day Monica would not lunch in the hotel with him:

"Please," she said. "Let's go to some place quiet. I want to *talk* to you."

"That means," he said lightly, "that you want me to talk to you, to give you advice. I can give you advice here as well as anywhere."

"I want you alone to-day. We'll meet people we know here. I always meet you in crowds." Already they were walking out of the hotel.

"I know a nice little place in Fifty-first Street," she said. "The dearest old ladies come there to drink iced tea."

"So that's it? You want a setting that will show off your youth."

She looked swiftly at him, smiling with arch gravity.

He had never seen her so subdued. He had never seen her quite so perfect. Sometimes he thought her colouring a bit too vivid, but to-day she was pale. Her golden hair peeped out from beneath a small toque, two dark-blue bird's wings, shaped like a helmet.

He told her she was looking charming, but she did not seem so pleased as usual at a compliment from him.

"I've read your St. Augustine," she said suddenly. "Most of it."

"I wanted you to read all of it," he said severely.

He had reproached her the last time for a wicked remark she had made about Courtney and he had told her it was sacrilegious for a girl named after the mother of St. Augustine to talk that way. She had not known that Monica was the name of St. Augustine's mother and she had become greatly interested in the career of the Saint. She wanted to know whether Monica, the Saint's mother, had written anything and Storrey told her that she was not a writer so far as he knew, having more important work to do. But her son had written a rather well-known work called the "Confessions," and the title had so intrigued Monica that she had made him promise to send her a copy.

"Yes," she said eagerly, "I read it nearly all. I thought it would be dull, but it wasn't, because you know he started off very badly, this saint. He only gets good—when he gets tired. . . Is that it?"

She looked at him questioningly, her eyes quite serious.

"Tell me," she repeated. "I want to know."

"It is difficult, little ingénue, to determine in such cases, whether renunciation or satiety is the cause. But what are such delicate problems to you? If I thought you'd have stopped with the conversion—"

"I know. You wanted me to be just edified. Am I so very wicked?"

"Not wicked. Merely not discriminating."

She pouted.

"Why am I?"

"Because," he said, "the cream of humanity worships you, and you spend your time lunching with a—a foot-note."

"What do you mean, a foot-note?" She frowned adorably when she was perplexed.

"A scribbler," he said, borrowing easily from a much-read novel, "is a mere foot-note to reality."

"Oh, but I like foot-notes," she said eagerly. "You know why. Because once we—a girl I knew at school and myself—got hold of some dry-looking translation of a novel by—oh, I forget—one of those wicked old Romans. Every few seconds or so there were stars in the text and down the bottom of the page there were little paragraphs that really belonged where the stars were. Only they were in Latin! We got a Latin dictionary—Lois and I . . ."

She chattered on telling of their difficulties with the dictionary . . . They turned into the restaurant, Monica nodding gaily to the waitresses; she seemed to know them all. They passed through the long dining-room and into an open space in the rear where there were small tables under coloured umbrellas.

"So you see, Storrey, I'm just a light, giddy creature and I love foot-notes. Now what are you going to do about it?"

He did not answer for a moment.

"You're incorrigible, Monica," he said finally.

"I know what you're thinking: that I ought to go in for solider things, heavy text-books. Oh, Storrey, imagine living all your life with a text-book—how bored you'd get!"

"Wouldn't be bad. If you had an occasional foot-note to relieve the monotony."

"I know what you want, Storrey. You want all the fun and none of the responsibility."

He leaned close to her and touched her hand.

"Don't talk like that, kiddie," he said. "I'm terribly fond of you—to-day."

"Just to-day!"

"Always."

"Then you might prove it."

"I am proving it."

"If you are, then you'll do me the favour I've come to ask of you."

"What is it?"

"It's such a little thing." She looked at him with troubled eyes. "It's—that you should marry me."

He was astonished. He was astonished because she wasn't laughing, because there was no laughter in her eyes. He was uncomfortable. He was sorry he had come. It was a mistake.

"I'll be ever so good, Storrey, really. I'm fond of you, you know. I won't bother you—ever. I'll just sit in a corner and not make a sound all the time while you write your wonderful poems—"

That was one thing about Monica he didn't entirely like. She really thought his poems wonderful and devoured them as they appeared, like caramels.

Fortunately the waitress came . . . They ordered consomme and creamed chicken and a salad, leaving the dessert to be decided on later. The waitress disappeared to fetch the consomme.

"What do you say, Storrey?" she resumed. "You see how persistent I am—"

She was smiling now. Storrey solemnly assured her that he would love her for ever and a day but that he would certainly not marry her.

"All right for you!" said Monica and began nibbling a biscuit, quite angry with him.

"The trouble is you don't understand anything about anything," said Storrey.

"The trouble is that you're damn selfish," said Monica. "Yes, you are. You like to go around and be petted by people. You're afraid I'll interfere." Her tone changed suddenly. "But I wouldn't interfere. Really I wouldn't. You could do anything you liked. You see, I know you're really fonder of me than of anyone. Just as I know that I'm fonder of you than I ever shall be of anyone."

"The very young," he said, "especially when female, are subject to obsessions."

"You might think you're so old yourself. You're only thirty . . . Mother always calls you 'that young fellow Storrey'! . . ."

Suddenly Monica held an imaginary lorgnette to her eyes and began speaking in a high, strained falsetto: "'That rather conceited young fellow—er—what's his name—oh, yes, Storrey. Storrey . . . ! Curious name, very curious. Writes. What? Poetry? You mean verses, my dear, verses. Has anyone ever read them? I'm sure I haven't. No time for such trash, you know—'"

Monica lowered the lorgnette. Her mimicry was delightful.

"Your stepmother is an intelligent woman, Monica. She doesn't even squander her time recklessly."

"Stingy old thing! She wants me to marry that old encyclopædia just because he's rich!"

"You refer to Courtney?"

"You know I do," said Monica savagely. "This shows—how much you like me! You're always playing with me. You're always making fun of me. I ask you to marry me and—instead of being glad—and saying yes—you—you keep me in suspense."

A tear glistened on her eyelash.

"I don't think it's fair of you to ask me to luncheon and take advantage of my absurdly sympathetic nature by threatening to cry. Please remove that teardrop, Monica—unobtrusively . . ."

"Heavens, I am sloppy! I'm sorry, old boy. But I've been jawing with the old lady till I'm half hysterical. Honest, I don't know whether I'm coming or going." She dabbed her eyes furtively with a bit of handkerchief. "Like a manicure at a movie, aren't I, Storrey?" She grimaced.

"You're a dear child, Monica, and I'm terribly in love with you, and to show you that I am I'm going to take you for a drive in the Park in a hansom cab and make you feel ashamed of yourself—"

She clapped her hands joyfully.

"Oh, Storrey!" she gasped ecstatically. "That's just what I've always wanted you to do to me. Is it a promise?"

"You're incorrigible," said Storrey, with decorum.

IV

People liked Clark Storrey for various reasons, some because he didn't take himself seriously; others because, though a writer, he was a "regular fellow"; others still because they thought him singularly detached in his judgments of things; and everybody liked him because they thought him a loyal and disinterested friend. Few people understood the true source of these things they deemed his virtues.

It was true, for example, that Storrey did not take himself seriously; but that sprang not so much from the absence of conceit in him as from the absolution it offered him from the struggle to attain a perfect and unhackneyed form of expression, from struggle of any sort whatever. If he was a "regular fellow" it was because, among business men and society women, he commanded thereby an adulation other artists would not have yielded him. If he was detached in his judgments it was because it helped him to justify his frailties to see them mirrored in others. The virtue attributed to him by everybody, that he was a loyal friend, was sheer nonsense and he despised the people who believed it. No man manipulated his friends as he did: he got from them everything he wanted, from a yachting cruise in the Mediterranean to the loan of a motor-car, things his luxury-loving soul demanded but that he was too poor to get for himself.

In the hansom with Monica, Storrey thought about these things and, what was unusual with him, he thought about them with a certain compunction. He knew the truth about himself, and now, for the first time, with Monica sitting beside him, her hand resting on his, the

knowledge gave him a certain twinge of discomfort.

After all, wasn't he running a serious risk in going on this way? Mightn't he become terribly bored, with a growing sense of emptiness, isolation, stealing up around him? . . . No, there was small danger of that: he loved material comforts too much, and, while he had them he could not remain long unhappy . . .

He looked at Monica's pure profile. . . . Why should he give her up to Courtney? It was ridiculous to give her up to Courtney. If he didn't marry Monica he would never marry anyone; that he knew. To think of her married to Courtney was a little like thinking of her wearing an eternal dead-white mask and hideous clothes. Courtney would not become her . . .

And yet he had just been telling her that it was eminently fitting for her to marry Courtney, that he would provide her with the exquisite background her loveliness needed.

"I can't marry him, Storrey, I can't," she was saying.

"He'll be a wonderful husband for you. Just the best. Won't bother you. Spends ages in the laboratory, you know."

"But he'll come back from the laboratory. I'm sure he doesn't sleep in the laboratory."

She looked at him with eyes of unblemished innocence. He patted her cheek. He liked her best when she looked like that . . . Why didn't he take her in his arms? Why didn't he kiss her? Why didn't he carry her off and live with her and fashion poems for her? No. That sort of idyll wasn't possible for him. If she were rich—very rich—perhaps. Or if he were. . . But limited means drove people too much together. "I mustn't do it," he kept telling himself.

"I've told mother, you know," said Monica finally, as though she had just remembered something.

"Told her what?"

"That I love you."

"You didn't!"

"Yes," she said tranquilly.

"And what did you say—about me?"

"I told her you loved me, too. And that you had asked me to marry you."

"You impertinent—! How dared you tell such a lie!"

"I'll tell you. I thought that if I told mother that you had asked me that you would be—well—sort of compromised—and you'd *have* to ask me. I'm trying to get it—sort of spread around. Now wait—" She put her hand over his mouth to silence his protest. "You see, I'm doing it for your good. I know that you do love me. I know that you do want to marry me. I know the reason you haven't asked me yourself is because you think you haven't enough money and that I want all sorts of frivolous things. It's just like you—you're so splendid and always thinking of other people. But you misjudge me, Storrey. I could be most awfully happy on just what you have. And so could you. So I'm just telling everybody that we're engaged . . ."

"You wretched child! You make me furious with you! But you're not really doing it!"

"Oh, but I am! Isn't it jolly? I'm thinking of sending an announcement to the papers. Of course! That's *just* what I'll do."

"You'll do nothing of the sort."

She laughed joyously.

"I've got you, Storrey. I've got you at last!"

She was maddening . . .

"You'll do no such thing," he repeated stupidly, not knowing what to say to her.

"Yes, I will. I've told everyone, so it might as well be in the papers."

"You little goose! Don't you see that now you'll have to marry Courtney? Your stepmother despises me. She'll disown you if you don't marry Courtney now. You'll have to marry him because you'll have to marry someone. I certainly shan't. Your stepmother will insist on it—to keep you from marrying me." He was genuinely frightened now.

"But how is she going to keep me from marrying you?"

"She won't have to. I'll disappear. I'll go away. I'll abandon you."

"You wouldn't, Storrey!"

"I won't let you ruin your life . . ." He didn't want to make that hypocritical speech. But habit was too strong . . .

"You wouldn't have people say you jilted me? And have them laugh at me . . . ?"

"That's just what I'm going to do," he said fiercely.

Twilight had fallen . . . In the half-darkness that had descended on them swiftly while they jogged along in the hansom, he saw her lips tremble slightly.

He touched her face with his hands and then drew her to him, kissing her eyes and cheeks and hair . . .

She sighed and rested in his arms contentedly, like a tired child. . . .

"Oh, Storrey," she whispered, "you make me so happy, Storrey . . ."

V

THEY were married in the country on the lawn of Fairview, overlooking the Hudson. Courtney believed in quiet weddings, so there were only a few people, immediate relatives and intimate friends. Storrey was best man.

It was a fine June day. The guests gathered on the terrace in front of the house, chatting and laughing together in little groups of twos and threes. A string orchestra played from a bay window screened with foliage. The long, low-set, rambling house had an air of having settled itself comfortably on the crest of the hill, like an old hen sitting on an egg.

Inside, the Bishop who was to perform the ceremony stood with his back to the great rubble fireplace in the living-room, dressed in full regalia (Courtney's mother was High Church), his surplice blowing in the breeze that swept through the open windows. The Bishop, in a deep, rich voice, was saying things about weddings . . .

Storrey felt uncomfortable, nervous, irritated. He walked into the library to smoke a cigarette. Courtney jumped at him from the chair in which he had been sitting:

"I'm frightfully nervous, Storrey!"

Storrey regarded him coldly. An intense dislike of Courtney had taken possession of him.

"I was going to send for you, Storrey," continued Courtney. "I wanted you near me."

"You'd better go in. I think you're wanted inside—"

Storrey found it unbearable to be talking to him.

"Wanted? Already?" He seized Storrey's hand. "All right. But I want you to know that I'll never forget what you've done for me. I owe it all to you. The happiest man in the world—"

He fumbled away, muttering gratitudes . . . Storrey, singularly unhappy, walked on through the library and came out on the veranda, encircling the rear of the house . . . Well, he'd done it! He'd thrown her away! Why? Why had he done it? Why had he given her up? He did not know . . .

A quick picture of Monica rose up before him, as she had been that last time—looking beseechingly at him and saying:

"You wouldn't abandon me, Storrey?"

"Damn him!" His fists clenched as he cursed Courtney under his breath. "Damn him! Damn him!" And after a moment: "What's the matter with you? You're being beastly. You're being sentimental. You're being jealous."

And he repeated to himself over and over the thousand reasons why marriage with Monica was impossible for him. If the whole thing were to do over he would do again exactly what he had done. There was no doubt of it. And yet . . .

And yet he could not shake off his mood, the deepening sense he felt that in throwing Monica into Courtney's

arms he had repressed the finest impulse he had ever had . . . But of course it wasn't that at all. It was jealousy. Plain jealousy. It was that he didn't want Courtney to have her. What had Courtney done to deserve her? . . .

"Damn that fellow," he said to himself, thinking suddenly of Courtney's scientific distinction. "He'll probably discover the Riddle of the Universe some week-end . . ."

What was the matter with him? Was he losing his sense of humour? What should he do with Monica on his hands?

It was just like Courtney to be rotten with money. If only he had Courtney's money. What a time he could give Monica with it!

A clear soprana sounded suddenly. . . . "Oh, Promise Me . . ." Storrey stood by the rail of the veranda, his hands in his pockets, staring off into space . . . He would go on for ever, he supposed, writing nice little verses to titillate the fancies of middle-aged virgins . . . eating other peoples' dinners and being pleasant to everybody. He would probably get fat . . . Yes, he would certainly get fat. . . . Already his collar was getting too tight for him. . . .

What a life! He wished he were blamed well out of it!

Courtney rushed in on him, seized him . . .

"For Heaven's sake, Storrey," he almost gasped. "We're all ready—waiting for you. Ten minutes late . . ."

Storrey addressed a remark to Courtney, which, happily, Courtney did not hear. Then he followed him inside.

VI

The Bishop was still talking about marriage. He was delivering generalizations to his clients . . . "It is an honourable estate . . ." he was assuring them. Did the bishop really believe that? Hadn't he read Shaw?

Then, for the first time, Storrey looked at Monica. She was standing with raised head looking the Bishop square in the eyes. There was something defiant in her bearing, something, too, unconquered and unconquerable.

"She's wonderful," Storrey said to himself. He looked at Courtney. He was standing limply, his big body looking flabbier than ever, his eyes fixed on the ground.

The Bishop's voice rose and fell. He was talking now about sharing things. . . . Storrey wondered what Monica was thinking. Was she aware of him? Of course she must be. Did she hate him? Would she continue to hate him? Did she understand him now or did she still believe that in renouncing her he was actuated by altruism?

Would they ever resume the old camaraderie? Not for a year, alas, certainly . . . But, maybe, sometime. Ennui might probably set in. When Courtney's talk about the nebular hypothesis might probably make her feel like jumping out of a window . . .

Storrey's depression began to lift. . . . Yes, Courtney might probably try to make an intellectual of Monica, not because he liked intellectual women, but in order to stimulate appreciation of his own achievements. And one day his hesitating expositions might probably drive her into hysterics and she might throw a book at him and run out of the room to be away from him . . .

And then she might probably telephone to him, Storrey. And he might probably meet her somewhere, perhaps in the old ladies' rendezvous in Fifty-first Street and he might see the desperation in Monica's eyes and he would understand. He would be gentle. He would be silent. He would be comforting. . . .

". . . Let him speak now or for ever after hold his peace . . ." boomed the Bishop.

THE DEBUTANTE

(A ONE-ACT PLAY)

By F. Scott Fitzgerald

Scene I.:—A large and dainty bedroom in the Connage house—a girl's room; pink walls and curtains and a pink bedspread on a cream-coloured bed. Pink and cream are the motifs of the room, but the only article of furniture in full view is a luxurious dressing table with a glass top and a three-sided mirror. On the walls we have an expensive print of "Cherry Ripe," a few polite dogs by Landseer, and the "King of the Black Isles" by Maxfield Parrish.

Great disorder consisting of the following items: (1) seven or eight empty cardboard boxes, with tissue paper tongues hanging panting from their mouths; (2) an assortment of street dresses mingled with their sisters of the evening, all upon the table, all evidently new; (3) a roll of tulle, which has lost its dignity and wound itself tortuously around everything in sight; and (4) upon the two small chairs, a collection of lingerie that beggars description. One would enjoy seeing the bill called forth by the finery displayed, and one is possessed by a desire to see the princess for whose benefit—Look! There's someone!—Disappointment! This is only a maid looking for something—she lifts a heap from a chair—Not there; another heap, the dressing table. She brings to light several beautiful chemises and an amazing pyjama, but this does not satisfy her—she goes out.

An indistinguishable mumble from the next room.

Now, we are getting warm. This is Mrs. Connage, ample, dignified, rouged to the dowager point and quite worn out. Her lips move significantly as she looks for it. Her search is less thorough than the maid's, but there is a touch of fury in it that quite makes up for its sketchiness. She stumbles on the tulle and her "damn" is quite audible. She retires, empty-handed.

More chatter outside and a girl's voice, a very spoiled voice, says: "Of all the stupid people—"

After a pause a third seeker enters, not she of the spoiled voice but a younger edition. This is Cecelia Connage, sixteen, pretty, shrewd and constitutionally good-humoured. She is dressed for the evening in a gown the obvious simplicity of which probably bores her. She goes to the nearest pile, selects a small pink garment and holds it up appraisingly.

CECELIA:

Pink?

ROSALIND:

Yes!

CECELIA:

Very snappy?

ROSALIND:

Yes!

CECELIA:

I've got it!

(*She sees herself in the mirror of the dressing table and commences to tickle-toe on the carpet.*)

ROSALIND:

(*Outside.*) What are you doing—trying it on?

(*Cecelia ceases and goes out, carrying the garment at the right shoulder. From the other door, enters Alec Connage, about twenty-three, healthy and quite sure of the cut of his dress clothes. He comes to the centre of the room and in a huge voice shouts:*)

Mamma!

(*There is a chorus of protest from next door and encouraged he starts toward it, but is repelled by another chorus.*)

ALEC:

So *that's* where you all are! Amory Blaine is here.

CECELIA:

(*Quickly.*) Take him downstairs.

ALEC:

Oh he *is* downstairs.

MRS. CONNAGE:

Well, you can show him where his room is. Tell him I'm sorry that I can't meet him now.

ALEC:

He's heard a lot about you all. I wish you'd hurry. Father's telling him all about the war and he's restless. He's sort of temperamental.

(*This last suffices to draw Cecelia into the room.*)

CECELIA:

(*Seating herself high upon lingerie.*) How do you mean temperamental?

ALEC:

Oh, he writes stuff.

CECELIA:

Does he play the piano?

ALEC:

I don't know. He's sort of ghostly, too—makes you scared to death sometimes—you know, all that artistic business.

CECELIA:

(*Speculatively.*) Drink?

ALEC:

Yes—nothing queer about him.

CECELIA:

Money?

ALEC:

Good Lord—ask him. No, I don't think so. Still he was at Princeton when I was at New Haven. He must have some.

MRS. CONNAGE:

(*Enter Mrs. Connage.*) Alec, of course, we're glad to have any friend of yours, but you must admit this is an inconvenient time, and he'll be a little neglected. This is Rosalind's week you see. When a girl comes out she needs *all* the attention.

ROSALIND:

(*Outside.*) Well, then prove it by coming here and hooking me.

(*Exit Mrs. Connage.*)

ALEC:

Rosalind hasn't changed a bit.

CECELIA:

(*In a lower tone.*) She's awfully spoiled.

ALEC:

Well, she'll meet her match to-night.

CECELIA:

Who—Mr. Amory Blaine?

(*Alec nods.*)

Well, Rosalind has still to meet the man she can't out-distance. Honestly, Alec, she treats men terribly. She abuses them and cuts them and breaks dates with them and yawns in their faces—and they come back for more.

ALEC:

They love it.

CECELIA:

They hate it. She's a—she's a sort of vampire, I think—and she can make girls do what she wants usually—only she hates girls.

ALEC:

Personality runs in our family.

CECELIA:

(*Resignedly.*) I guess it ran out before it got to me.

ALEC:

Does Rosalind behave herself?

CECELIA:

Not particularly well. Oh, she's average—smokes sometimes, drinks punch, frequently kissed—Oh, yes—common knowledge—one of the effects of the war you know.

(*Emerges—Mrs. Connage.*)

MRS. CONNAGE:

Rosalind's almost finished and I can go down and meet your friend.

(*Exeunt Alec and his mother.*)

ROSALIND:

(*Outside.*) Oh, mother—

CECELIA:

Mother's gone down.

(*Rosalind enters, dressed—except for her flowing hair. Rosalind is unquestionably beautiful. A radiant skin with two spots of vanishing colour, and a face with one of those eternal mouths, which only one out of every fifty beauties possesses. It is sensual, slightly, but small and beautifully shaped. If Rosalind had less intelligence her "spoiled" expression might be called a pout, but she seems to have sprung into growth without that immaturity that "pout" suggests. She is wonderfully built, one notices immediately, slender and athletic, yet lacking under-development. Her voice, scarcely musical, has the ghost of an alto quality and is full of vivid instant personality.*)

ROSALIND:

Honestly there are only two costumes in the world I really enjoy being in—(*combing her hair at the dressing table*) a hoop skirt dress with pantaloons or a bathing suit. I'm quite charming in both of them.

CECELIA:

Are you glad you're coming out?

ROSALIND:

Delighted.

CECELIA:

(*Cynically.*) So you can get married and live on Long Island with the *fast younger married set?* You want life to be a chain of flirtation, with a man for every link.

ROSALIND:

Want it to be one!—you mean I've *found* it one.

CECELIA:

Ha!

ROSALIND:

Cecelia, darling, you don't know what a trial it is to be—like me—I've got to keep my face like steel in the street to keep men from winking at me. If I laugh hard from a front row at the theatre, the comedian plays to me for the rest of the evening. If I drop my voice, my eyes, my handkerchief at a dance my partner calls me up on the phone every day for a week.

CECELIA:

It must be an awful strain.

ROSALIND:

The unfortunate part is that the only men who interest me at all are the totally ineligible ones. Ah—if I were poor, I'd go on the stage. That's where my type belongs.

CECELIA:

Yes, you might as well get paid for the amount of acting you do.

ROSALIND:

Sometimes when I've felt particularly radiant I've thought—why should this be wasted on one man—?

CECELIA:

Often when you're particularly sulky, I've wondered why it should all be wasted on just one family.

(*Getting up.*) I think I'll go down and meet Mr. Amory Blaine. I like temperamental men.

ROSALIND:

My dear girl, there aren't any. Men don't know how to be really angry or really happy—and the ones that do go to pieces.

CECELIA:

Well I'm glad I don't have all your worries, I'm engaged.

ROSALIND:

(*With a scornful smile.*) Engaged? Why you little lunatic. If mother heard you talking like that she'd send you off to boarding school where you belong.

CECELIA:

You won't tell her though, because I know things I could tell—and you're too selfish.

ROSALIND:

(*A little annoyed.*) Run along little girl!—Who are you engaged to, the iceman?—the man that keeps the candy store?

CECELIA:

Cheap wit—good-bye, darling, I'll see you later.

ROSALIND:

Oh be *sure* and do that—you're *such* a help.

(*Exit Cecelia Rosalind finishes her hair and rises, humming. She goes up to the mirror and starts to dance in front of it, on the soft carpet. She watches not her feet but her eyes—never casually but always intently, even when she smiles.*)

(*The door suddenly opens and then slams behind a good-looking young man, with a straight, romantic profile, who sees her and melts to instant confusion.*)

HE:

Oh, I'm sorry, I thought—

SHE:

(*Smiling radiantly.*) Oh, you're Amory Blaine, aren't you?

HE:

(*Regarding her closely.*) And you're Rosalind?

SHE:

I'm going to call you Amory—oh, come in—it's all right—mother'll be right in—(*under her breath*) unfortunately.

HE:

(*Gazing around.*) This is sort of a new wrinkle for me.

SHE:

This is No Man's Land.

HE:

This is where you—you—(*embarrassment.*)

SHE:

Yes—all those things.

(*She crosses to the bureau.*) See, here's my rouge—eye pencils.

HE:

I didn't know you were that way.

SHE:

What did you expect?

HE:

I thought you'd be sort of—sort of—sexless; you know, swim and play golf.

SHE:

Oh I do—but not in business hours.

HE:

Business?

SHE:

Six to two—strictly.

HE:

I'd like to have some stock in the corporation.

SHE:

Oh, it's not a corporation—it's just "Rosalind, Unlimited." Fifty-one shares, name, goodwill and everything goes at $25,000 a year.

HE:

(*Disapprovingly.*) Sort of a chilly proposition.

SHE:

Well, Amory, you don't mind—do you? When I meet a man that doesn't bore me to death after two weeks, perhaps it'll be different.

HE:

Odd, you have the same point of view on men that I have on women.

SHE:

I'm not really feminine, you know—in my mind.

HE:

(*Interested.*) Go on.

SHE:

No, you—you go on—you've made me talk against myself. That's against the rules.

HE:

Rules?

SHE:

My own rules—but you—oh, Amory, I hear you're brilliant. The family expects so much of you.

HE:

How encouraging.

SHE:

Alec said you'd taught him to think. Did you? I don't believe anyone could.

HE:

No, I'm really quite dull.

(*He evidently doesn't intend this to be taken quite seriously.*)

SHE:

Liar.

HE:

I'm—I'm religious—I'm literary. I've—I've even written poems.

SHE:

Vers libre—splendid. (*She declaims.*)

Trees are green,
The birds are singing in the trees,
The girl sips her poison,
The bird flies away; the girl dies.

HE:

(*Laughing.*) No, not that kind.

SHE:

(*Suddenly.*) I like you.

HE:

Don't.

SHE:

Modest too—

HE:

I'm afraid of you. I'm always afraid of a girl—until I've kissed her.

SHE:

(*Emphatically.*) My dear boy, the war is over.

HE:

So I'll always be afraid of you.

SHE:

(*Rather sadly.*) I suppose you will.

(*A slight pause on both their parts.*)

HE:

(*After due consideration*). Listen. This is a frightful thing to ask.

SHE:

(*Knowing what's coming.*) After five minutes.

HE:

But will you—kiss me?—Or are you afraid?

SHE:

I'm never afraid—but your reasons are so poor.

HE:

Rosalind, I really *want* to kiss you.

SHE:

So do I.

(*They kiss—definitely and thoroughly.*)

HE:

(*After a breathless second.*) Well, your curiosity is satisfied.

SHE:

Is yours?

HE:

No, it's only aroused.
(*He looks it.*)

SHE:

(*Dreamily.*) I've kissed dozens of men, I suppose I'll kiss dozens more.

HE:

(*Abstractedly.*) Yes, I suppose you could—like that.

SHE:

Most people like the way I kiss.

HE:

(*Remembering himself.*) Good Lord, yes. Kiss me once more, Rosalind.

SHE:

No—my curiosity is generally satisfied at one.

HE:

(*Discouraged.*) Is that a rule?

SHE:

I make rules to fit the cases.

HE:

You and I are somewhat alike—except that I'm years older in experience.

SHE:

How old are you?

HE:

Twenty-three. You?

SHE:

Nineteen—just.

HE:

I suppose you're the product of a fashionable school.

SHE:

No—I'm fairly raw material.—I was expelled from Spence—I've forgotten why.

HE:

What's your general trend?

SHE:

Oh, I'm bright, quite selfish, emotional when aroused, fond of admiration.

HE:

(*Suddenly.*) I don't want to fall in love with you—

SHE:

(*Raising her eyebrows.*) Nobody asked you to.

HE:

(*Continuing calmly*)—But I probably will. I love your mouth.

SHE:

Hush—please don't fall in love with my mouth—hair, eyes, shoulders, slippers—but not my mouth. Everybody falls in love with my mouth.

HE:

It's quite beautiful.

SHE:

It's too small.

HE:

No it isn't—let's see.
(*He kisses her again with the same thoroughness.*)

SHE:

(*Rather moved.*) Say nothing sweet!

HE:

(*Frightened.*) Lord help me.

SHE:

(*Drawing away.*) Well, don't—if it's so hard.

HE:

Shall we pretend? So soon?

SHE:

We haven't the same standards of time as other people.

HE:

Already it's—other people.

SHE:

Let's pretend.

HE:

No—I can't—it's sentimental.

SHE:

You're not sentimental?

HE:

No, I'm romantic—a sentimental person thinks things will last—a romantic person hopes against hope that they won't. Sentiment is emotional.

SHE:

And you're not? (*with her eyes half closed.*) You probably flatter yourself that that's a superior attitude.

HE:

Well—oh Rosalind, Rosalind, don't argue—kiss me again.

SHE:

(*Quite chilly now.*) No—I have no desire to kiss you.

HE:

(*Openly taken aback.*) You wanted to kiss me a minute ago.

SHE:

This is now.

HE:

I'd better go.

SHE:

I suppose so.

(*He goes toward the door.*)

SHE:

Oh!

(*He turns.*)

SHE:

(*Laughing.*) Score Home Team, 100—Opponents, Zero.

(*He starts back.*)

(*Quickly.*) Rain—no game!

(*He goes out.*)

(*She goes quickly to the chest of drawers, takes out a cigarette case and hides it in the side drawer of a desk. Her mother enters—note book in hand.*)

MRS. CONNAGE:

Good—I've been wanting to speak to you alone before we go downstairs.

ROSALIND:

Heavens, you frighten me.

MRS. CONNAGE:

Rosalind, you've been a very expensive proposition.

ROSALIND:

(*Resignedly.*) Yes.

MRS. CONNAGE:

And you know your father hasn't what he once had.

ROSALIND:

(*Making a wry face.*) Oh please don't talk about money.

MRS. CONNAGE:

You can't do anything without it. This is our last year in this house—and unless things change, Cecilia won't have the advantages you've had.

ROSALIND:

(*Impatiently.*) Well—what is it?

MRS. CONNAGE:

So I ask you to please mind me in several things I've put down in my note book. The first one is: Don't disappear with young men. There may be a time when it's valuable, but at present I want you on the dance floor where I can find you. There are certain men I want to have you meet and I don't like finding you in some corner of the conservatory exchanging silliness with anyone — or listening to it.

ROSALIND:

(*Sarcastically.*) Yes, listening to it *is* better.

MRS. CONNAGE:

And don't waste a lot of time with the college set—little boys nineteen and twenty years old. I don't mind a prom. or a football match, but staying away from advantageous parties to eat in little cafés down town with Tom, Dick and Harry—

ROSALIND:

(*Offering her code, which is by the way quite as high as her mother's.*)

Mother, it's done—one can't run

everything now the way one did in the early nineties.

MRS. CONNAGE:

(*Paying no attention.*) There are several bachelor friends of your father's that I want you to meet to-night—youngish men.

ROSALIND:

(*Nodding wisely.*) About forty-five?

MRS. CONNAGE:

(*Sharply.*) Why not?

ROSALIND:

Oh, *quite* all right—they know life and are so adorably tired looking—(*shakes her head*) but they *will* dance.

MRS. CONNAGE:

I haven't met Mr. Blaine—but I don't think you'll care for him. He doesn't sound like a money maker.

ROSALIND:

Mother, I never *think* about money.

MRS. CONNAGE:

You never keep it long enough to think about it.

ROSALIND:

(*Sighs.*) Yes, I suppose some day I'll marry a ton of it—out of sheer boredom.

MRS. CONNAGE:

(*Referring to note book.*) I had a wire from Hartford. Dawson Ryder is coming up. Now there's a young man I like, and he's floating in money. It seems to me that since you seem tired of Howard Gillespie, you might give Mr. Ryder some encouragement. This is the third time he's been up in a month.

ROSALIND:

How did you know I was tired of Howard Gillespie?

MRS. CONNAGE:

The poor boy looks so miserable every time he comes.

ROSALIND:

That was one of those romantic, pre-battle affairs. They're all wrong.

MRS. CONNAGE:

(*Her say said.*) At any rate make us proud of you to-night.

ROSALIND:

Don't you think I'm beautiful.

MRS. CONNAGE:

You know you are.

(*From downstairs is heard the shriek of a violin being tuned, the rattle of a drum. Mrs. Connage turns quickly to her daughter.*)

MRS. CONNAGE:

Come.

ROSALIND:

One minute.

(*Her mother leaves. Rosalind goes to the glass, where she gazes at herself with great satisfaction. She kisses her hand and touches her mirrored mouth with it. Then she turns out the light and leaves the room.*

Silence for a moment. A few chords from the piano, the discreet message of faint drums, the rustle of new silk, all blend on the staircase outside and drift in through the partly opened door. Bundled figures pass in the lighted hall. The laughter heard below becomes doubled and multiplied. Then someone comes in from the side, switches on the lights and closes the door. It is Cecelia. She goes to the chest of drawers, looks in the drawers, hesitates—then to the desk, whence she takes the cigarette case and selects one. She lights it and puffing and blowing walks toward the mirror.)

CECELIA:

(*In tremendously sophisticated accents.*) Oh, yes, coming out is *such* a farce nowadays you know. One really plays around *so* much before one is seventeen, that it's positively anti-climax.

(Shaking hands with a visionary, middle-aged nobleman.)

Yes, Duke—I b'lieve I've heard my sister speak of you. Have a puff—they're very good. They're—they're Coronas. You don't smoke? What a pity! The King doesn't allow it I suppose. Yes, I'll dance.

(So she dances around the room to a tune from downstairs. Her arms outstretched to an imaginary partner. The cigarette waving in her hand. Darkness comes quickly down and the lights stay low until—)

Scene II

Draperies cut off the stage to a corner of a den downstairs, filled by a very comfortable leather lounge. A small light is on each side above and in the middle; over the couch hangs a painting of a very old, very dignified gentleman, period 1860. Outside the music is heard in a fox trot.

Rosalind is seated on the lounge and on her left is Harold Gillespie, a shallow youth of about twenty-four. He is obviously very unhappy and she quite bored.

GILLESPIE:

(*Feebly.*) What do you mean I've changed. I feel the same toward you.

ROSALIND:

But you don't look the same to me.

GILLESPIE:

Three weeks ago you used to say that you liked me because I was so blasé, so indifferent—I still am.

ROSALIND:

But not about me. I used to like you because you had brown eyes and thin legs.

GILLESPIE:

(*Helplessly.*) They're still thin and brown.

ROSALIND:

I used to think you were never jealous. Now you follow me with your eyes wherever I go.

GILLESPIE:

I love you.

ROSALIND:

(*Coldly.*) I know it.

GILLESPIE:

And you haven't kissed me for two weeks. I had an idea that after a girl was kissed she was—was—won.

ROSALIND:

Those days are over. I have to be won all over again every time you see me.

GILLESPIE:

Are you serious?

ROSALIND:

About as usual. There used to be two kinds of kisses: First when girls were kissed and deserted, second when they were engaged. Now there's a third kind where the man is kissed and deserted. If Mr. Jones of the nineties bragged he'd kissed a girl everyone knew he was through with her. If Mr. Jones of 1919 brags the same, everyone knows it's because he can't kiss her any more. Given a decent start any girl can beat a man nowadays.

GILLESPIE:

Then why do you play with men?

ROSALIND:

(*Leaning forward confidentially.*) For that first moment, when he's interested. There *is* a moment—Oh, just before the first kiss, a whispered word—something that makes it worth while.

GILLESPIE:

And then?

ROSALIND:

Then after that you make him talk about himself. Pretty soon he thinks of nothing but being alone with you.—He sulks, he won't fight, he doesn't want to play—Victory.

(Enter Dawson Ryder, twenty-six, handsome, rather cold, wealthy, faithful to his own, a bore perhaps, but steady and sure of success.)

RYDER:

I believe this is my dance, Rosalind.

ROSALIND:

Very well, Dawson. Mr. Ryder this is Mr. Gillespie. (*They shake hands and Gillespie leaves tremendously downcast.*)

RYDER:

Your party is certainly a success.

ROSALIND:

It is—I haven't seen it lately. I'm weary—Do you mind sitting out?

RYDER:

Mind—I'm delighted. You know I loathe this "rushing" idea. See a girl yesterday, to-day, to-morrow.

ROSALIND:

Dawson!

RYDER:

What?

ROSALIND:

I wonder if you know you love me.

RYDER:

(*Startled.*) What — Oh — I say, you're remarkable.

ROSALIND:

Because you know I'm an awful proposition. Anyone who marries me would have his hands full. I'm mean—mighty mean.

RYDER:

Oh, I wouldn't say that.

ROSALIND:

Oh, yes I am—especially to the people nearest to me.

(*She rises.*)

Come, let's go. I have changed my mind and I want to dance. Mother is probably having a fit.

(*They start out.*)

Does one shimmy in Hartford?

(*Exeunt.*)

(*Enter Alec and Cecilia.*)

CECELIA:

Just my luck to get my own brother for an intermission.

ALEC:

(*Gloomily.*) I'll go if you want me to.

CECELIA:

Good heavens no—who would I begin the next dance with?

(*Sighs.*)

There's no colour in a dance since the French officers went back.

ALEC:

I hope Amory doesn't fall in love with Rosalind.

CECELIA:

Why, I had an idea you wanted him to.

ALEC:

I did, but since seeing these girls—I don't know. I'm awfully attached to Amory. He's sensitive and I don't want him to break his heart over somebody who doesn't care about him.

CECELIA:

He's very good looking.

ALEC:

She won't marry him, but a girl doesn't have to marry a man to break his heart.

CECELIA:

What does it? I wish I knew the secret.

ALEC:

Why, you cold-blooded little kitty. It's lucky for some that the Lord gave you a pug nose.

(*Enter Mrs. Connage.*)

MRS. CONNAGE:

Where on earth is Rosalind?

ALEC:

(*Brilliantly.*) Of course you've come to the best people to find out. She'd naturally be with us.

MRS. CONNAGE:

Her father has marshalled eight bachelor millionaires to meet her.

ALEC:

You might form a squad and march through the halls.

MRS. CONNAGE:

I'm perfectly serious—for all I know she may be at the Cocoanut Grove with some football player on the night of her début. You look left and I'll—

ALEC:

(*Flippantly.*) Hadn't you better send the butler through the cellar?

MRS. CONNAGE:

(*Perfectly serious.*) Oh, you don't think she'd be there!

CECELIA:

He's only joking, mother.

ALEC:

Mother had a picture of her tapping a keg of beer with some high hurdler.

MRS. CONNAGE:

Let's look right away.

(*They go out. Enter Rosalind with Gillespie.*)

GILLESPIE:

Rosalind—Once more I ask you. Don't you care a blessed thing about me?

(*Enter Amory.*)

AMORY:

My dance.

ROSALIND:

Mr. Gillespie, this is Mr. Blaine.

GILLESPIE:

I've met Mr. Blaine. From Drayton, aren't you?

AMORY:

Yes.

GILLESPIE:

(*Desperately.*) I've been there. It's rather awful.

AMORY:

(*Spicily.*) I don't know. I always felt that I'd rather be provincial hot-tamale than soup without seasoning.

GILLESPIE:

What?

AMORY:

Oh, no offence.

(*Gillespie bows and leaves.*)

ROSALIND:

He's too much *people.*

AMORY:

I was in love with a *people* once.

ROSALIND:

So?

AMORY:

Oh yes, some fool—nothing at all to her, except what I read into her.

ROSALIND:

What happened?

AMORY:

Finally I convinced her that she was smarter than I was—then she threw me over. Said I was impractical, you know.

ROSALIND:

What do you mean, impractical?

AMORY:

Oh—drive a car, but can't change a tyre.

ROSALIND:

What are you going to do?

AMORY:

Write—I'm going to start here in New York.

ROSALIND:

Greenwich Village.

AMORY:

Good heavens no—I said write—not drink.

ROSALIND:

I like business men. Clever men are usually so plain.

AMORY:

I feel as if I'd known you ages.

ROSALIND:

Oh, are you going to commence the "pyramid" story?

AMORY:

No—I was going to make it French. I was Louis 14th and you were one of my—my (*Changing his tone.*) Suppose—we fell in love.

ROSALIND:

I've suggested pretending.

AMORY:

If we did it would be very big.

ROSALIND:

Why?

AMORY:

Because selfish people are in a way terribly capable of great loves.

ROSALIND:

Pretend. (*Turning her lips up.*) (*Very deliberately they kiss.*)

AMORY:

I can't say sweet things. But you are beautiful.

ROSALIND:

Not that.

AMORY:

What then?

ROSALIND:

(*Sadly.*) Oh, nothing—only I want sentiment, real sentiment—and I never find it.

AMORY:

I never find anything else in the world—and I loathe it.

ROSALIND:

It's so hard to find a male to gratify one's artistic taste. (*Someone has opened a door and the music of a waltz surges into the room. Rosalind rises.*)

ROSALIND:

Listen, they're playing "Kiss Me Again." (*He looks at her.*)

AMORY:

Well?

ROSALIND:

Well?

AMORY:

(*Softly—the battle lost.*) I love you.

ROSALIND:

I love you. (*They kiss.*)

AMORY:

Oh, God, what have I done?

ROSALIND:

Nothing. Oh, don't talk. Kiss me again.

AMORY:

I don't know why or how, but I love you—from the moment I saw you.

ROSALIND:

Me too—I—I—want to belong to you. (*Her brother strolls in, starts and then in a loud voice says, "Oh, excuse me," and goes.*)

ROSALIND:

(*Her lips scarcely stirring.*) Don't let me go—I don't care who knows.

AMORY:

Say it.

ROSALIND:

I love you. (*They part.*)

ROSALIND:

Oh—I am very youthful, thank God—and rather beautiful, thank God—and happy, thank God, thank God—(*She pauses and then in an odd burst of frankness adds.*) Poor Amory! (*He kisses her again.*)

CURTAIN.

THE CAPTIVE

By Mifflin Crane

THERE was a tender embrace in the hall, a long kiss in the vestibule, he held her hand on the porch, he waved to her several times as he went down the street. Then, turning the corner, his shoulders drooped, he thrust his hands deep into his pockets, slackened his pace, and stared morosely at the dim pavement. At last he was snared!

A dull unhappiness fell over his spirits like a cloud. He recalled the incidents of the evening, the absurd ardour of his pleading—her final acceptance. There was no honourable escape now; he must see it through; with an inward groan he realized that all along he had foreseen this disastrous end.

Snared? No, that was not fair; he'd put the noose around his own neck. There had been a long fight to draw out this evening's dire "yes"—it was the damnable lure of that fight that had been his undoing.

He recalled their first meeting vividly. The night aided his recollections. Like this one, it was warm, languorous, with suggestive winds stirring in the air—the first evening. At the summer hotel she appeared with the old man and presently some gossip told him that the old fellow was her fiancé. This interested him; he looked at her keenly; he appreciated her charm at once. She leaned on the old fellow's arm, giving her young smiles to his unworthy eyes. At that moment Warren experienced his first emotion of stubborn opposition.

A second later he was introduced to her. Presently they danced together. From a seat along the wall the old man watched them, smiling with fatuous assurance. Warren disliked him at once. She was light and soft in his arms; what right had the old codger to her youth?

But she had been difficult to dissuade from her purpose. She had harsh ideas of honour; she respected her own word. Within a week he was arguing the folly of her course, with no apparent success.

"I'm beginning to like you," she said. "That means, for the sake of safety, that I won't let you see me again after I go back to the city. I've given my word. He's very kind to me. Perhaps he hasn't all that I may want, but I believe I'll be happy with him."

These arguments had enraged him and, unattainable, he wanted her immensely. At the same time, he had always been glad that at bottom it was a safe game. He felt that he would never conquer, she would never give in to him. He had all the emotional pleasure of ardent love-making, with none of the dangers. He could indulge in despair, in pleasant agonies of pleading—she would persist in her refusal.

Now, alas, he had succeeded.

At the corner he stood under the arc light, pondering morosely. Ideas of sudden flight, disappearance, ignominious escape came into his mind—and were rejected. A policeman passed, came back, eyed him curiously and then drew closer.

"Waiting for someone?" he asked.

"No," answered Warren.

"It's pretty late," suggested the policeman. "Maybe you'd better go on home."

"Don't want to go home," he answered.

The officer peered into his face.

"What's the matter with you?" he asked.

Warren looked up smiling with melancholy.

"Just been accepted," he said. "I'll soon be married."

"Well, what of it then? I've had three wives meself."

Warren gazed at him in sad admiration.

"You're a strong man," he said.

Turning away slowly, he continued his walk. A dull, depressing picture moved like a panorama of misfortune through his imagination. He visioned himself the slave of regularity, the proper husband. He witnessed his homecoming at night, the questions if he chanced to be late, the bored hours when all possible conversation had been exhausted, the horrible indifference, the relief of the morning's escape. He went so far as to hear the howl of a nocturnal infant. The grotesque humour of the newspaper cartoonists entered his thoughts. He recalled all the comic strips about married men.

"I'm about to be one of them!" he thought.

And then, superimposing themselves upon these meditations, came recollections of his other girls. Forgotten faces crowded into his mind. He remembered plump little Mabel, who pouted when she kissed, who cuddled into his arms like a kitten. A stupid girl! She bored him so much at last that he had stopped seeing her.

And Gladys—a quarrelsome wench. Her snappy temper had charmed him for a time—until its novelty passed into unpleasantness. That was two years ago—two years since he had seen Gladys.

A blurred succession of names passed through his mind. Bernice, Alice, Janet, Cloe, Martha, Gay, Daisy, four or five Marys, a half a dozen Helens. For one reason or another, he had abandoned them all; his interest had waned.

But now, strangely enough, each one of these half-forgotten girls recovered some measure of her early charm. One by one their faces, their voices, their gestures, their little mannerisms, came back to him in pleasant memory. He wondered about Gladys, he speculated about Janet, he tried to imagine the activities of the Helens, the Marys. The cloud passed from his face and was superseded by an expression of agreeable interest.

Then, realizing his change of mood, he searched for its inward cause. There were several puzzling minutes, until comprehension presented itself.

He was going to be married—and so he thought of the others. His marriage no longer affrighted his mind, nor caused him that melancholy and despair.

Marriage, he saw, was an excellent thing. It enhanced the charm of *other* women so potently!

A MAN always remembers the good women he has met. A woman always remembers the scoundrels.

GIRLS seldom marry the men they flirt with. But it is not the fault of the girls.

THE MEMORIES

By L. M. Hussey

I

ALTHOUGH she had vaguely realized the danger of his work, she had never feared for him; he seemed infallible.

Often, as she stood at the door in the morning, her eyes following his disappearing figure, she had thrilled with an immeasurable pride and felt the strength of a profound confidence. Both of them were so strong, unconquerable in the power of their love, of their companionship, of their youth. And because of her assurance, the news of his accident came to her as a devastating surprise.

Late in the morning his assistant in the laboratory had telephoned her.

"This is Mrs. Gardner?" the voice asked.

"Yes; what is it?"

There was a hesitant pause.

"I have bad news . . ." the voice said.

But in her unshaken faith she felt no immediate fear.

"What is the matter?" she asked.

The man gathered courage enough to announce a summary of the truth.

"We had an accident here this morning," he said. "Both of us were burned. I was lucky enough to practically escape. But Mr. Gardner is in the hospital."

For several moments her incredulity kept her speechless. Then she questioned him further and her ears recorded snatches of the incredible details . . . a still-head had become loose . . . a sudden sheet of flaming liquid had enveloped the two men in an instant of time. Yet even when she returned the receiver to the hook she had no adequate apprehension of the reality.

She stood in the hall for several seconds in motionless surprise, one hand still resting flexed upon the telephone. In another moment she realized that precious seconds were passing; an immense wave of pity and compassion set her senses to tingling. He was hurt; he must be suffering—and he would want her!

She hurried toward the stairs, ran up, and entering their room, went at once to the wardrobe to find her wraps.

She thought constantly of his pain and of the certain alleviation her presence would bring him. Already she was planning to remove him from the hospital, take him home with her, where she could tend him with the tireless strength of her love.

She emerged from the house quickly, but she was calmer now; her assurance had returned. Although she felt no lessening of her natural impatience to reach his side, she was not the victim of any overwhelming foreboding but only of her pity and surprise.

Her pity seemed to grow with each step. Picturing him in pain, she herself was the object of a vicarious suffering that at the same time was not wholly unpleasant.

Waiting impatiently for the car, a peculiar thrilling elation stirred in her consciousness. The prospect of sacrificial days—a week—a month—enchanted her. She would not sleep, she would not pause to eat, but always near him, tenderly ministering to him, she would demonstrate the reality of her affection. It was a test; the test of her abounding devotion.

The car came; she stepped on and immediately after finding a seat, she began to wonder at her folly. Why had she failed to call a taxi? The car was incredibly slow, it crept through each square and it stopped at every corner.

She shifted about in her seat nervously, looked out of the window innumerable times and hours seemed to pass before the conveyance stopped at the street she wanted.

Stepping down from the car quickly, she saw the hospital a block above and she walked toward the buildings rapidly.

First she went to the accident ward and confirmed the fact that her husband had been brought there.

The young interne, very professional in his white coat, looked at her gravely.

"I treated him," he said; "he's burned very badly."

"His face?"

"Yes, face . . . hands . . . very bad."

"I must see him at once!"

He looked dubiously at her determined face.

"You'll have to go around to the office," he said. "Maybe you can talk to the Chief Resident. I don't know. . . ."

She thanked him, crossed the court that separated the accident ward from the main building, and entered the office.

She was lucky enough to find the Resident Physician at his desk.

He was inclined to refuse her request; he told her at first that it would be much better to come back the next day, but something in her unswerving manner led him to relent. He was a little tired and he scented the extent of her obduracy.

Another interne went up with her in the elevator and led her through a corridor on one of the upper floors. They entered a moderate sized room that contained half a dozen beds; four of them were occupied. She looked from figure to figure, but she did not recognize Gardner.

The interne was aware of her perplexity at once.

"He won't know you," he said. "He's asleep now, I imagine. Morphine's necessary in these cases."

He preceded her to the bed against the farther wall and she stood over the motionless figure that lay there in a drugged sleep.

She saw nothing of his face, except a horrible area of disfigured chin, uncovered, with the bandages that concealed all his head and upper features. A grease was laid thick over the seared flesh and the glisten of this oily dressing added a measure to the sudden shock of revealment. In this instant she had her first adequate appreciation of the situation's seriousness.

A shrinking emotion, too powerful to oppose, occasioned her to step back a pace. She felt her hands begin to tremble; her firm lips parted and grew lax. Then her tenderness and her deep pity came back to her like the flow after an ebb and she stepped up resolutely to the bed.

She knew that she must not touch him, but she leaned over, braving the closer scrutiny of him. A man in the next bed turned over and uttered a low sound of pain. Then she realized that she must get him away as soon as it could be arranged; she wanted him home with her, close to her saving devotion. Once again the prospect of sacrificial hours thrilled her.

"Tell me," she said, speaking almost in a whisper, looking up resolutely into the face of the young man beside her. "How bad is he? Don't be afraid to tell me the truth. I need to know."

The young fellow was evasive.

"It's too soon to say anything definite," he answered. "You see, it's almost impossible to predict the complications. A week or two . . . more easy to say something then . . ."

He had assisted in making the first dressing. He knew the man's condition as well as it could be known. But he did not feel it necessary to make any specific statements then. As to the patient's eyes—a certain fact—, that

could be confessed later. By somebody else. He was young enough and inexperienced enough to feel some measure of sentimental shrinking.

He looked at Mrs. Gardner admiringly. Even in his regretful condition, the injured mass was not wholly unenviable . . .

II

THEIR family physician arranged for the transfer. Gardner was brought home a week later, carried upstairs into a darkened room, and there he lay from day to day in a drugged stupor.

For more than two weeks he was unaware of his surroundings, conscious of nothing but his moments of pain, oblivious to the tireless ministrations of his self-appointed nurse. He passed through a more or less protracted crisis and then his chances of living grew daily more favourable. Hourly the eventuation of an organic collapse seemed further remote. About this time the doctor took Mrs. Gardner aside and confessed the fact he had known for a fortnight.

He admired her fortitude in receiving the news he revealed.

She exhibited only a brief instant of recoil, a single, swift second of nervous collapse.

"Blind!" she exclaimed.

And then her lips compressed themselves again and a slow flush spread up over her cheeks. Her dark eyes filmed a little and the lids dropped over them from the effect of some inscrutable inner emotion.

He saw at once that there would be no hysteria and no embarrassing lamentations, but the misted eyes and the persistent flush that spread, that continued, that mounted upward covering her white forehead as in the reflection of a crimson veil, puzzled him a little. She stood in front of him speechless and motionless and in those seconds he was acutely conscious of her beauty.

She had never imagined this calamity. But the strength of a fervour that had made her tireless at the bedside of her beloved was now her resisting armament to the thrust of this unforeseen blow.

Her mood, that passionate urge to the actual demonstration of her devoted tenderness, her sacrificial mood, embraced the possibilities of this final revelation. A new spirit was born in her body, a new vision of life and a fresh philosophy.

She had a second's image of herself, the self that was her not more than a month ago. How foolish she had been, how filled with an unfounded confidence! The prospect of her days seemed absolute then, a perfected sequence against which life could oppose no serious alarms. Now she comprehended the possibility of disaster.

But not a final nor even a deeply significant disaster. This terrible fact that had sounded ominously in her ears a moment before, was not the expression of defeat. Many times, in the arms of the man she loved, she had uttered the profoundly believed assurance of her undying affection. At this thought the flush began to mount her smooth, pale cheeks. There had always been an inadequacy in her words, the inadequacy of any words that arise from an essentially inexpressible emotion. It seemed to her now that life was to give her the opportunity for their complete fulfilment and their entire, unstinted expression.

That evening, for the first time, Gardner recognized her presence and spoke to her directly.

She was sitting at his bedside when his voice came thickly between his lips, yet her eager ears comprehended each difficult syllable.

"Where am I?" he asked.

"At home, dear," she murmured. "Everything is safe. I am with you."

He was silent for a moment.

"Edith?" he questioned later.

"Yes," she assured him.

It was a torture not to be able to press his hand and reassure him by the warmth of her touch. She let her fingers rest lightly on his arm.

But his mind was not yet entirely

normal. He began to talk again; he seemed to forget the fact of her presence and his words concerned themselves with a querulous review of the accident. It was by no means clear to him.

"I don't understand. I don't understand," he repeated.

Her pity seemed immeasurable. But a very essential quality of her old emotions, the former, thrilling viewpoint, was for ever gone.

In the days before his accident, during the entire year of their marriage, her love had gone out to him mingled with an invariable assurance of strength of their two selves together. Once, shortly after their marriage, they had spent a week at the seashore. She recalled how they had risen early in the morning and gone down to the sands, and stood there with their arms linked, watching the breakers roll in ceaselessly.

A sidelong glance at his face had revealed him with his head thrown back eagerly, his nostrils faintly dilated and almost an aura of eager life surrounding him as a vital emanation. For months that had stood in her mind as a clear symbol of their joined strength, and the essence of its significance entered into all the intimate moments of their affection. Without clearly knowing the truth of it, that symbol was dead. Hereafter he would stand beside her weakly, the dependent of her faithfulness.

From now on his recovery was more rapid. In a week the bandages were gone from his hands and some of them were removed from his face. The scars grew daily less dreadful. Still it was difficult for her to look at him. She forced that act upon herself but she was powerless to overcome the frequent waves of shrinking and revulsion that swept up unwanted into her senses.

She felt this shrinking as a deep reproach and the fact of it troubled her excessively. In a measure, it was breaking her faith with him; it held the quality of a betrayal.

Sometimes in the night, awaking from sleep, she thought of his face, she shuddered; and then, wholly regretful of this reflex tremor, her eyes filled with tears, the tips of her fingers buried themselves painfully in her palms and she steeled her vision to see him clearly, constantly, as he was and as he would be—and never as he had been.

She more or less dreaded the hour when it would be necessary to tell Gardner, in whatever soothing words she could bring to her lips, the extent of his calamity.

As it happened, the fulfilment of this difficult task was not required. When he was able to sit up, and finally to walk about, she led him from room to room by the hand and he accepted her guidance with complete understanding.

Although at this period the bandages were not yet removed from his eyes, he knew that he would never see.

Now she spent as many hours with him as she could—nearly the whole day. She read to him for long stretches of time, until her throat became dry and her clear voice veiled with the strain of forming so many words. He sat very quietly, close to her chair, smiling occasionally, now and then touching her hand in appreciation.

Once, as she closed the book, glancing at his face, the vision of his patience and resignation nearly overwhelmed her with a complex and curious emotion, and then another feeling that startled her at first, made her draw in a quick gasp of breath, widened her dark eyes.

What she felt in that instant was a vaguely defined apprehension of his strangeness, of his utter difference.

This patient man, with his pathetic smiles, with his sightless eyes, with his hours of motionless silence, was not the lover that had come to her with his gift of gorgeous dreams and the promise of unmeasured fulfilment. Only an insufficient externality remained; he had the same name, he spoke with the same voice, there were old, familiar gestures, but what was essential was gone; the alluring prospect of the coming years had vanished.

After the passage of another month he was fully recovered and their life together settled down into a routine. They arose later in the morning now, for he no longer left the house after their breakfast together, leaving her alone with an increasing eagerness for his return as the hours passed.

He gradually learned to dress himself with little help from her; he could find his way about the house alone. As she prepared breakfast she would hear his slow step on the stairs, and then his groping hands against the wall as he came into the dining-room to find her. Their meal was far more silent than the old one had been.

They had none of their former plans to discuss. There were no expectations, no hopes, no alluring chances.

After they had finished, he usually wanted to have the news from the morning paper; she read the headlines over to him and any details he requested.

Afterward he returned to the upper floor, sat in the living-room until she joined him later. Here she sometimes read to him again; on other occasions they talked, or were silent. In these silent periods she sat idly in a chair, staring out of the window and her spirits became gradually the victim of a brooding melancholy.

She endeavoured to maintain her first thrill in the prospect of devoted sacrifice. There were moments when she was successful. Often some words of his, some little movement of his hands recalled the past, bringing back the memories of her dreams. She recollected then the measure of their accomplishment and forgot for a second the promises that were gone. A rush of intense tenderness would warm her then like a lighted flame. She would seize his hands and kiss them; she would press his face against her own. But the achievement of this loving mood became daily more difficult.

She was subject to sudden and startling revealments. One of the most acute of these happened one afternoon as she and Gardner were walking out together.

She was holding his arm, walking slowly at his side.

"It's warm to-day," he said. "The sun is shining. I can feel it on my face."

"Yes," she answered, listlessly.

An automobile turned the corner, drew up at the curb and a young man alighted near them. He stood in an eager attitude and his companion, a young woman, put out her hand and stepped down close to him. They remained a second at the side of the car, and then, with entwined arms, crossed the sidewalk and ran up the steps of one of the houses.

The young fellow was leaning close to her, whispering something into her ear. She laughed. He responded and laughed with her.

Following them with her eyes, Gardner's wife looked up at them as they stood on the doorstep, waiting for some response to their ring.

She witnessed their obvious gladness in each other and their obliviousness to all else but themselves. As she watched it came to her swiftly that a few months before she and Gardner must have presented the same picture. They too had been an oblivious pair, the symbols of assurance and hope.

Her husband was pulling at her arm.

"What is the matter?" he asked.

For a second she did not notice; she did not hear his question.

"What is the matter?" he repeated. "What do you see, dear?"

His voice came into her ears remotely.

"Nothing," she murmured.

She took a step forward; they walked on again. The significance of what she had just seen had profoundly moved her. The girl's face was before her eyes and a sudden, intense jealousy stirred her senses.

She looked swiftly at Gardner; his face, drooping downward a trifle, was pointed straight ahead and her glance met the outlines of his ineffectual profile. Her jealousy became mixed

with anger and for a moment she almost hated the man at her side. He seemed to her then the agent of some monstrous theft, the stealing of her expectations. After a few moments these thoughts passed from her mind.

Yet for the first time she felt no remorse, no sense of having been untrue to him. They walked on together, in silence. Her consciousness was filled with a vague resentment.

III

After the passage of six months a difficulty that she had never considered in the early weeks of his affliction loomed up now in proportions that assumed a daily increase. An intolerable fact presented itself; they were running out of money.

For this problem she had no solution. As its acuteness increased she underwent moments of bitter wonder; why had she never thought of it before? Something had kept her blind, some foolish emotion, some thrill full of folly.

She began to consider what she could do, but nothing occurred to her and she was the victim now of a new abhorrent appreciation of her helplessness. Before this material necessity her courage seemed to fail her and she understood her inadequacy. This embittered her against Gardner, who assumed now the proportions of an intolerable weight, dragging her down to unguessed depths. She began to avoid him; he sat alone for hours at a stretch; she seldom read to him now.

Quite unexpectedly a partial salvation from her perplexity came in the shape of a letter from his brother.

The brother was a remote person to her; she had never seen him. He lived in Utah, somewhere near Salt Lake City, and he was the only one of Gardner's family who had ever made any money. Several months before, at Gardner's request, she had written him, telling of the calamity. Several letters were exchanged.

By some sudden clairvoyance perhaps, it occurred to this brother now that they might be in difficulties. He suggested that they make him a visit and he also enclosed a cheque for the expenses of the trip.

"You'd better come out here and live," he said, "for a time anyway—until you can get some other plans. Perhaps while you're here we can figure out something that Edward can do. I think I can help you. There's no use remaining in the East."

This opportunity did not particularly gladden her, but it relieved her perplexity and worry to a very great degree. She disliked the idea of the trip and she hated the sense of charity that underlay her acceptance. Yet there was nothing else to do.

The necessary arrangements for departure consumed another month and then they left the East.

Edith had never been farther west than Ohio, and she left the East with a deep regret and a very pronounced resentfulness. It seemed impossible for her to acquire any adequate resignation to the facts that life had brought her. But Gardner was wholly resigned and she found his acquiescence small and hateful.

They made a stop at Chicago, and then continued the tiresome journey. Although Edith approached their destination with no happy expectancy, she was greatly relieved as the journey grew near its close; the days in the train had been nearly unbearable. She could not talk to her husband; they had nothing to say to each other; all the communion that had bound them so closely before had vanished like an evaporated liquid.

The brother met them at the station—a middle-aged man who bore some resemblance to her husband. He exhibited no sentimentality at the sight of the younger man, which pleased the woman who would have found an emotional greeting difficult to play up to. But he was kind enough, cordial enough and thoroughly efficient in his activities.

They were driven out to his home, some miles from the city, and quite close to the foothills of the mountains.

Here the elder Gardner had a ranch, his plaything for the past half-dozen years. The house was large, devoid of any artistic merit, but nevertheless agreeable. All arrangements had been completed for their arrival. Three rooms were at their exclusive disposal, and Gardner's wife found that she was not sorry for her coming.

The second evening of their stay the brother talked to her in a straightforward and sensible way.

"Do you feel at home here?" he asked.

"Well . . ." she began.

"A foolish question for me to ask," he said. "Of course you miss a hundred things now. You'll like it better later on. I want you to be free of all anxiety."

"That's good of you," she murmured.

"No; the only decent thing I can do," he affirmed. "I've seen nothing of Edward since he grew up—left him in the East when he was a boy. It's a bad thing that's happened to him; a rotten trade he took up. I tried to get him out here; he wouldn't come."

He paused and looked searchingly at the face of the woman before him.

"Both of you are young," he said finally. "Life played you a bad turn, very bad. Nobody can help that now, of course. Try to feel as comfortable as you can here; don't worry."

His words gave her a certain relief and she was sure that she liked him.

For several weeks she felt easier, less embittered—even, to a certain measure, resigned. She spent more time with Gardner and they took long walks together. Later, a car was put at their disposal, and after she had learned to drive it they took trips into the mountains, following the steep roads and often alighting for walks along ways that were inaccessible to a car.

Gardner greatly enjoyed the trips into the mountains, but after a time the woman found them somehow depressing; on their return she would grow silent and a brooding melancholy captured her spirits. The austere summits of the mountains, lifted up in remote peaks above her, oppressed her, belittled her and thrust upon her consciousness the futile prospect of the coming years. She found that her former bitterness was returning.

On her occasional trips to the city the sight of a young man and a young woman together, the witnessing of joyous pairs such as the two that had first aroused her in the East, never failed to affect her profoundly. Her resentment grew steadily. She had been cheated, and Gardner, no matter what his condition, was the cause. Returning from such trips, she could scarcely bear to look at him, she hated the sound of his voice and she found his uncertain gestures, the gropings of his hesitating hands, the resignation of his sightless face, intolerable to her eyes.

It was after a hurried visit alone to the city that the crisis of her emotions came to her.

She had returned shortly after lunch and Gardner urged upon her a drive for the afternoon. She found it easier to consent than to argue and they started off together in the car.

She drove faster than usual; she pressed down the accelerator button with an almost brutal thrust of her small foot. They ascended a winding road and presently the panorama of the plains lay spread out before them, an infinite peace in the sunlight. Close to the car sheer cliffs loomed up abruptly casting purple shadows over the hard-packed road. In the distance the peaks of the long, austere ranges were white with snow.

Gardner touched her arm.

"Suppose we stop, dear," he suggested. "Let's walk a little."

She slipped out the clutch and shifted the gear with a metallic rasp, acquiescing without a word. She helped him descend from the car and, walking forward a few yards, turned with him into a path that hugged the edge of the cliffs.

She had never chosen such a narrow way before, but this afternoon she

craved the exhilaration from a sense of danger. She scarcely thought of Gardner.

"Keep in close to the rocks," she told him. "It's pretty narrow here."

His step grew more slow; he seemed timorous.

Finally he stopped.

"Don't you think this is a little too much for me?" he asked.

His words aroused her curiously; all his helplessness seemed revealed to her in its abominable entirety—and all his endless dependency. He was weak; he was afraid; he was useless.

"Don't be silly," she muttered.

She hastened her step and through necessity he held to her arm and followed her.

In this way they went on for several minutes.

The path turned and ahead of her she saw a sharp bend, almost a right-angled turn. If a sightless man should walk straight ahead, he would go over the cliff at that bend, and drop down two thousand feet. . . .

Her head seemed to swim; she became giddy with a sudden purpose. Almost instantly she spoke. Her voice came to her ears remotely, like a strained echo.

"It's getting wider here," she murmured. "Keep your hand along the edge of the cliff and walk straight ahead; I'm right behind you."

She withdrew her arm swiftly and stepped behind him.

For an instant he hesitated, somewhat surprised, and then with his customary docility he stumbled ahead.

Her eyes were larger, her breath came fast, she stared at the wavering figure in front of her, approaching near to the bend.

Now he had only a few paces to go; the blood throbbed in her ears like the sound of a beating drum.

And then, an instant before that moment that would have meant her freedom and deliverance, her memories returned to her.

The blind man was metamorphosed into her lover again and all the allure of their other days passed in a chain of visions before her eyes.

She remembered his arms about her, she felt his kisses, she recalled their voices speaking the vows of their love.

With a cry that mingled memories with despair, she rushed toward him, seized him about the body, and pulled him backward on the path.

For a moment she held him thus, immobile and exhausted. Following upon her recollections came a crushing revelation. She knew then that she could never go from him, that she could never be rid of him. The dreadful power of her memories would restrain her always, would hold her in an endless bondage, would keep her for all his life in this prison of unwanted sacrifice.

She felt his body trembling under her hands. He turned his head.

"What is the matter?" he whispered.

There was no answer; no sound but the gasps of her rapid breathing.

THERE are two kinds of women who are uninteresting to a man—those who love him, and those who love their husbands.

A WOMAN changes her mind often, but seldom her viewpoint.

LES DEBUTS D'UN CHASSEUR DE TIGRES

By Louis Carpeaux

DEPUIS plusieurs jours on vivait dans l'inquiétude dans mon poste de Ya-Ho. Chaque nuit, un tigre, qu'on disait énorme, venait rôder aux alentours. Les indigènes, terrorisés, me suppliaient de les délivrer de ce péril quotidien.

Bientôt, les agressions de la bête devinrent plus audacieuses. Elle affolait jusque dans l'écurie mes deux poneys, qui brisaient leur licol, couraient dans le poste. Sans la haute et solide palissade qui nous protégeait tous, un malheur serait arrivé, comme à Yen-Bay, petite ville du haut fleuve Rouge, où le pauvre légionnaire Serrier, en faction la nuit, avait été tué raide d'un coup de patte sur la colonne vertébrale, enlevé et dévoré.

Le tigre m'assommait; je résolus de le tuer.

On ne peut le chasser en plein jour, car il a soin de ne s'y jamais montrer. Il faut des nuits noires comme de l'encre, des nuits à tigre.

C'est par une de ces nuits que je l'attendis, perché dans un arbre à cinq mètres de haut, sur un rustique mirador, formé de quelques bambous accolés entre les deux bras d'une fourche.

Pour attirer le terrible fauve, je m'étais muni d'un jeune cochon, attaché au pied de l'arbre et relié à moi par une ficelle attenante à sa queue. Quand je voulais le faire crier, je n'avais qu'à tirer la ficelle; et il faisait une vie infernale!

J'étais sûr que le tigre, allèché, sauterait dessus, et que je n'aurais qu'à bien viser au moment où il l'emporterait. . . . . Je me suis attaché sur mon mirador, pour ne pas tomber.

Il fait si noir que je ne puic distinguer le blanc de la culasse de mon fusil. Comment ferai-je pour tirer? . . .

La première heure se passe sans trop d'émotion. Cependant, je me trouve un peu seul, perdu au milieu de cette nature exotique, où je me sens un intrus, étranger aux choses comme aux gens. Je tressaille vaguement aux bruits sourds, comme voilés de mystère, de l'immense forêt endormie, du sein de laquelle s'échappe le bouillonnement régulier de l'arroyo aux innombrables lacets. Puis je suis d'un œil distrait les mouches à feu, grosses étincelles volantes, ça et là, sur les herbes, sur les arbres. L'engourdissement me gagne peu à peu. Je sommeille, la ficelle tenant la queue du cochon attaché à ma main droit, mon fusil chargé dans le bras gauche.

"Ao-ao-ao! . . ."

—Le tigre!

Je sors de ma torpeur, en même temps qu'une violente secousse à la main me rappelle mon cochon toujours attaché. Le tigre a crié. Mais où est-il? Peut-être à un éilomètre, peut-être à trois. La voix de ce fauve est si aiguë, si perçante!

N'empêche, j'en ai froid dans le dos. Je trouve que mon mirador est bien près du sol. D'un bond, le tigre peut m'attraper une jambe; et puis qui donc a dit qu'il ne grimpait pas? M. Buffon, je crois. Est-ce qu'il y est allé voir, lui? Après tout, le tigre est un chat. Pourvu que je n'en fasse pas la trite expérience?

Je suis démoralisé, complètement démoralisé, et mon cochon l'est encore plus que moi, car il pousse des petits grognements de frayeur étouffés. Aussi, ne me sentant pas en sûreté, je grimpe d'un étage, presque au sommet de l'arbre, risquant à chaque instant de laisser tomber mon fusil. Je regrette ne n'avoir pas pris ma baïonnette, car j'aurais pu piquer le mufle et les pattes du fauve, s'il grimpe à l'arbre, tandis que maintenant. . . .

Sur le haut de mon arbre, je relève les pieds le plus possible; je les tâte, pour voir s'ils sont toujours là. Oh! j'ai une frousse! Pour un peu, j'appellerais, je crierais.

Mais je songe à un petit flacon d'alcool à 90° que j'ai emporté pour me remonter le moral. Je le vide d'un seul coup.

Ah! ça va mieux. J'ai retrouvé mon assiette, et je redescends sur mon mirador, bien résolu à tirer sur le tigre, s'il approche.

Heureusement, je n'ai pas lâché la longue ficelle qui tient la queue du cochon. Je tire furieusement dessus. Mais le pauvre eporc, terrifié par le cri du fauve, ne bronche pas: à peine fait-il entendre un léger grognement.

Le tigre ramperait-il aux environs? Je tends l'oreille anxieusement, cherchant à percevoir son souffle, semblable à celui du chat. . . . Je n'entends toujours que le grondement de l'arroyo dans le lointain. Soudain, un bruit d'herbe, une feuille remuée, quelque chose de vague me fait frémier de nouveau. J'écoute battre mon cœur à tout rompre; j'écarquille les yeux dans l'obscurité profonde. Pour apercevoir mon guidon, je frotte une allumette dessus, sans grand résultat. Mais un léger souffle fait tressaillir la brousse, tandis que deux points brillants sortent des hautes herbes, me regardant fixement.

Les yeux du tigre! . . . "Poum!"

Un éclair jaillit. Tout l'horizon retentit de la détonation répétée à l'infini. Les yeux se sont envolés! C'étaient deux mouches à feu, posées sur la même brindille, que le vent balançait.

Le tigre ne viendra pas; je n'ai plus qu'à descendre.

Or, une pensée subite me traverse l'esprit. Il est peut-être là, tapi dans quelque coin, attendant que je descende. Il voit clair la nuit, lui!

Et je remonte prudemment ma jambe déjà allongée.

Vraiment, quand l'on est seul, cette brousse noire et impénétrable est trop émotionnante. Je préfère attendre l'aurore, malgré les fourmis rouges qui me dévorent.

Et je passe ainsi toute la nuit, juché dans mon arbre.

TWO MEN

By Paul Tanaquil

YOU gave your joy to him; he gazed into your smiling eyes and kissed the half-hushed gasp of wonder on your lips; he savoured all the happy beauties of you.

But I—I knew your tears!

THE EVICTION

By Burton Kline

ABOVE all else Wharton preferred to be thought of as a fighter. Regular up and down he-man, that's what he was. Bluff and blunt, almost explosive, in his speech. He wanted people to know, by the Great Horn Spoon, where he stood. His very hair, copper-coloured and brushed into a formidable pompadour, itself fairly bristled.

"Well! You old pickled sardine! How be ye?" Such was apt to be his habitual greeting of a friend.

Or, "You poor fried egg, now what do *you* want?" he would say to a friendly visitor to his office.

Wharton was a lawyer. And you would think him ideally suited to the calling.

Probably he would have made a lawyer, if he had practised law. The truth about Wharton was that he was lazy. A competence permitted him to have a fashionable bachelor apartment, to wear smart raiment, and belong to smart clubs. And, to be fair with him, once in a while he did pitch in and practise some law. His friends alone would have given him many a case if they had been sure that he wanted them. As it was they got him to draw up their wills. And one of them induced him to collect the rents on a group of tenements.

What famous letters Wharton could write! The ordinary lawyer's letter brings shudders enough to a delinquent debtor, but Wharton's letters would cast a gloom over the entire community. After one of them, the sight of even his name on the envelope was enough to induce a sinking spell. There was no mistaking him. Wharton was a fighter.

The one trouble with him was that he was a fighter without a steady job. So seldom did he have anything to fight.

One day, however, the owner of the tenements called at Wharton's office in a tall building adjoining the financial district of the town.

"Well, well, well! You fine, two-handed money-grubber! Now what's the trouble with you?"

"Nothing colossal. But how about that old lady Grinnell? Has she paid up?"

"No! And by heck, we'll see about that!" Wharton made a rush for his file. "No, by George! She hasn't! And I wrote her a letter that must have put a crimp in her hair. I gave her three days to come across."

"Maybe she can't read." The tenement owner was a dry fellow.

"You bet she can read. I'll get after that dame again, in a way so she'll know it, by ginger!" And Wharton pushed the button for his stenographer.

"Just a moment," his visitor stayed him. "Haven't we been patient long enough with that old dame? She sets a bad example to the rest of the tenants in that building. What do you say? Let's get after her."

"Sure, we'll get after her!"

"Yes, I know. But let's—let's take steps."

"'Steps'— What steps?"

"Well—" The landlord faltered. "I suppose it will be hard. I'm no blamed Shylock. And I understand that woman has children. And it *has* been a hard winter. But this thing can't go on. They'll all begin to copy her.

Let's—let's evict her. It will teach 'em a lesson."

"Just as you say, old man!" Wharton brought his fist down on the desk, so that the paper weights hopped and danced.

The landlord rose to go. "Might as well do it soon, what? She'll postpone and postpone for ever, if we don't."

"Time the blow, and it's as good as done!"

"Well—" The landlord paused with his hand on the knob. "Make it to-day, why not?"

"To-day! So be it!" Again the thump on the desk.

And the landlord friend departed.

II

WHEN he had gone Wharton did a strange thing—for Wharton. He winced.

"H'm!" he said to himself, with his face still awry.

New experience, this, for Wharton. "Evict her, eh?" he said. "H'm!"

And he leaned back in his swivel chair to think it over.

He sat there an hour, thinking it over. Then he clapped on his hat, and jerked on his fur coat, and went to the nearest of his clubs. It might be he would find some lawyer friend there, who could give him a tip or two as to how the thing was done. But at that hour of the morning the club was deserted, and Wharton was left to think it over. A glance at the clock told him it was quarter to twelve—just when Mrs. Grinnell would be preparing her luncheon. No time to pounce on her! She'd be sure to be tired and in a nasty humour. Better wait till after luncheon. People are reasonable after luncheon. Half the business of the world is done over the luncheon table. And Wharton picked up a paper to pass the time.

And dropped it promptly. On the front page, under blazing headlines, was a column-long account of a cruel eviction. He bolted into the library, and there stood a row of Dickens to plague him. Dickens he knew only too well.

"What are you going to do about it?" asked the friend who joined him for luncheon at one.

"Oh, I'm going to pounce right on her! There's only one way to grasp the thorn!"

"I don't envy you the job."

After luncheon Wharton fell in with another friend who proposed a game of billiards.

"Well, I'm glad I'm no lawyer!" quoth he when he heard Wharton's account of the business.

About four o'clock that afternoon the fighting Wharton left the club for his interview with Mrs. Grinnell. He could fairly see her as he walked along. He knew the type—tearful, woeful, whining, begging, blackguardly, grey-haired, stooped, promising anything and everything for a little more time.

None of that for Wharton! He quickened his steps, so that he plunged along, to have the thing over with in a flourish. And thunderous was the knock he administered to Mrs. Grinnell's door.

The door was opened, but the grey-haired, cringing woman was not in view. In her stead was a small, slight, tired woman with dark hair, with large dark eyes, with a bit of sewing in her hand, and a smile.

"I'm Mr. Wharton," said Wharton, as if that finished everything. "I'm here to see Mrs. Grinnell. Isn't this her place? Is she here?"

A serious expression melted the smile on the woman's face, and she said, "I am Mrs. Grinnell." After a moment she added, "Won't you come in?"

III

WHARTON entered. And it happened not to be a dirty hovel he entered. It was a clean pair of rooms. The windows were crossed by curtains that happened to be white. The only tell-tale thing about the place was the dismal creak of the chair as Wharton, puffing

from his rapid walk in a heavy coat, sat down.

"Are you really Mr. Wharton?" asked the widow, by way of relieving the strain. "If you'll pardon me, you don't look a bit like your letters."

"Flattery!" thought Wharton.

He was still on his guard, studying what form of Billingsgate he might expect and how he would meet it, when Mrs. Grinnell said on,

"I know what you've come for, Mr. Wharton. And—"

The blast was about to begin, then, thought Wharton. Would it be tears or imprecations?"

"I'm ready," the even voice went on. "Ready for anything." Mrs. Grinnell's eyes swept her simple belongings as if in farewell.

"I suppose I have been foolish. The women about here don't need much sewing that they can't do for themselves. Most of them have to do their own. And others from a distance, maybe, don't like to come into this neighbourhood. It would have been better to move. But I never could get money enough together to move. And—" She laughed lightly, and the dark eyes turned from a vacant stare out of the window to Wharton. "And I can't seem to make money enough to stay here! Isn't it a predicament! I'm—I'm really sorry to have given you so much trouble, Mr. Wharton. I must say, you've been patient. But—"

Wharton was scarcely even thinking. He sat there as one sits at a concert, listening to a voice. If he thought anything at all, it was, "Oh, damn that tightwad and Shylock for wishing me into this!"

But Mrs. Grinnell was leaving such a blank for him to fill, in the long pause that ensued, that he felt obliged to say something. Hence he shifted uneasily in his chair, and perspired in his coat.

"Won't you take it off?" Mrs. Grinnell noticed his trouble, and rose to relieve him. "It's Persian lamb, isn't it?" She held up the garment for a moment's admiration. "Strangely like one my husband used to have. I was—so sorry to give it up."

"Well—er—really—" Again Wharton felt obliged to say something, but ended with clearing his throat.

Mrs. Grinnell had sat down again.

"I suppose," she hesitated, "you want me to get out?" She, at least, was able to come to the point.

"Well—er—I tell you, Mrs. Grinnell, I'm not acting on my own account, you understand. You understand that, don't you? I'm—I'm simply under instructions from my client."

"It must be hard for you. I think we don't give lawyers credit for hating to do what they have to do."

"Well—er—I—agree!"

"But in a way, Mr. Wharton, I'm glad you've come. I knew it was hanging over me. It's better to have it over. I—suppose I might obtain charity to—to tide me over, and provide me with things, till I can get going again. Perhaps in a better place, where my work would bring in enough to support me. But one does hate to do that. I've been foolish, perhaps, to delay. Still it's so much pleasanter, making your own way in the world. Isn't it?"

"I—I agree!"

"But—of course—it must be." Mrs. Grinnell paused for a brief moment. "I'll miss it here. You may laugh at that, but it's true. You see, I used to work among people like these all about me, and I learned to know them—or thought I did. I certainly know them now, now that I live among them. And one can endure anything, it seems to me, when one is so touched all the time by the kindness of people. Don't you think so?"

"Oh—oh, yes! Oh, yes!"

"Excuse me, Mr. Wharton. You must think I am trying to work on your sympathies. But there is one thing I would really like to ask. If you can really see your way to it. I wish my—my leaving needn't be made—made too public. I don't care for myself, but I'm afraid the neighbours might feel called upon to help me again And

they have done already more than they should. Otherwise—"

She paused for her answer.

"Well, now, I tell you, Mrs.—Mrs. Grinnell—er—it *may* be—"

"Oh, I'm so glad! It would spare my children, too. They'll miss it here. It will be—be hard for them to leave. They like the school and the other children, and I've been glad of it. They're bright little things, my boys, and work hard, and I'm sure they're going to get on. But it will always be good for them to have lived here. They'll understand so many things afterward. So— Really, it must be painful for you—such work as this."

"It is! It certainly is, Mrs. Grinnell! You've no idea—"

"Well, let's get it over with as soon as we can, Mr. Wharton. Don't mind me. We'll both feel better then."

Wharton was fumbling about in an inside coat pocket for memoranda. "Let's see, Mrs. Grinnell—er—how much—? Confound it! I seem to have left the slip in my office!"

"It's $49 I owe."

"Well—" Wharton let his hand rest across his breast in the pocket. "Er—you say it's $49?" He whipped out his hand. "Well, here it is."

"The—the summons? I—I think you've made a mistake."

"Yes, I've made a mistake—in coming here for that damned old shyster, your crab of a landlord! I'm done with him! Wharton rose, puffing and fuming, "I say, Mrs. Grinnell, I hope you can overlook this. I feel damned crummy for coming here." Wharton again held out the packet of banknotes. "I know this is a rotten way of doing it—patronizing, and all that. But if you can see your way to—to a little—call it a loan! Call it anything you like! And here's a little advance, to—to tide you over till you get going again!"

And Wharton grabbed his coat and burst out of the door. . . .

IV

NEXT day the landlord called on Wharton, to inquire about results.

"Well, you croaking old crab! You want to count the scratches on me, do you?"

"Is—is she gone?"

"She's going! You—*bet*—she's going! That woman's going to get out of there! I usually do what I set out to do, don't I? Well, I'm going round there to-morrow *personally* to see that woman make tracks for somewhere else. And you keep away. It wouldn't be healthy for you to be about. She'd leave you a ruin!"

And Wharton thumped his desk.

QUANDARY

By Kenneth Tirowen

I WOULD sing you songs
Dawn and evening,
Sad songs, mad songs,
About everything—

Passion and flowers,
Star-dust and dew. . . .
This alone hinders:
Who are you?

THE LITTLE GRISETTE

By John C. Cavendish

SHE is not a pure racial type: whilst her hair is yellow, it has no curl, and her eyes, instead of blue, are brown.

She appears in the office at quarter to nine, stares all around, fingers the mail on the boss's desk, then leisurely removes her hat and coat. Afterward, she attends to her hair.

With a twiddling motion of the fingers she produces small, ill-defined corkscrews from two or three wisps that have blown down upon her neck, pats the curious puffs—each like the chrysalis of some extraordinary pupa—that cover her ears, finishes the job with the aid of a hand-mirror and a touch of powder for her nose.

She goes to her desk, raises the typewriter from its well, sits down and for a time stares out of the window without seeing anything.

Her boss appears. At the sight of him she pats her hair again and with a movement of her shoulders, half rhythmic, half jerking, she pulls the fallen straps of her chemise back into place.

These are small, pink ribbons, somewhat faded and very long in the back so that in this quarter the top of the chemise, plainly visible through her cheap Georgette crêpe waist, falls below the angle of her sharp scapulæ; in front her little chest is bare for several inches underneath the distinct hollows of her clavical bones.

The boss walks over to her desk, and she taps the space bar of her typewriter several times, reaches for her notebook, pushes her pencil into her hair, and smiles. She observes that he is in a bad humour, but she does not care; she feels her feminine superiority to him; she knows that he is afraid of his wife.

The boss has never made love to her, for which she is neither glad nor sorry. What he might do in the future is another matter. Nothing could surprise her, for to be surprised demands imagination. If at any time he asks her to go out with him, she will not refuse; she will make him take her to the best place she can think of, make him spend all the money she can, give him a cold look when he becomes insinuating, have herself brought home in a taxi if possible, and then, whilst he stands on the sidewalk, smile very sweetly and run indoors. He will never get fresh with her!

Until twelve o'clock she transcribes from his dictation and then, running a little water over her hands, powdering her face again, patting her hair once more, she glides from the office to go out for lunch. She never brings her lunch; that is not refined.

On the street she meets her friend Betty.

"Hello, kid!" she says.

"Hello, kid!"

"Say, maybe I wasn't on a swell party last night, kid! You ought've been along! One of the fellas has his car and we drove out to the Inn. They have—"

"I don't care much for the Inn."

"Why, kid, the bill came to—"

"I know, it's expensive and all that, but the orchestra's no good. I don't care much for the bunch that goes there, either."

"Well, I'm not crazy about the crowd that goes there; maybe you're right.

We had a swell time though. He's the nicest fella!"

"Who is this fella with the car?"

"Never mind; I'm going to have you meet him soon."

"Has he got any friends?"

"Sure he has; there's another fella he knows that you'll like that isn't afraid to spend; we'll have a little party soon."

"Well, don't forget then, kid!"

"No, I won't forget."

"Isn't it hot?"

"I thought I'd melt."

"So did I!"

"Well, so long, then."

"So long."

She strolls on, with an expression of superior indifference on her little face and no thoughts at all in her little head.

Indeed, it is not required that she have thoughts. A place exists for her in the social system and her destiny is assured: she herself is assured. As she returns to the office she goes to her work with neither interest, understanding, nor enthusiasm. The office work is not a vocation; it is a step, a necessary step, upon which she has paused, a month, a year, two years. Finally she will have a husband.

She does not dream wildly of that moment, because there is no fire of dreaming in her little yellow head. Having no visions, no tragedy will ever come to her; disillusionment is impossible. She has some shrewd ideas about her future marriage; it will bring her, not everything she could desire, but a certain measure of her wantings. This gift she will accept as her right, without wonder and without gratitude.

Her work will then be neither as hard, nor as long—nor will it be as exacting. Above everything, she can be careless and inefficient. She will owe nothing to anybody.

Securing her man does not worry her. For, no matter how stupid she may be, she possesses, instead of intelligence, a certain cunning, adequate to her needs; the men she knows are more stupid than herself.

And the accident of life, the accident of her sex, has given her a power that needs no intelligence, that requires no thought and that is as ruthless as any natural law.

To some man she will present herself, without an effort of her own, as a necessity. Cursed with a glimmer of imagination, he will discover in her the lure of mystery.

He will be the dreamer; she will be his defeat.

A WISE man is one who knows many things and believes very few of them.

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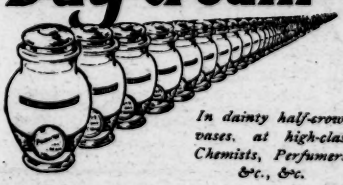

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ABOUT FASHIONS AND OTHER THINGS

By Various Hands

At a recent exclusive fashion parade the topsy-turveydom of everything was brought home very clearly. The audience was composed of the *crème de la crème* of society, and they were being shown cloaks and coat collars made in imitation furs. These were not cheap by any means, but since the munition girl and profiteer have developed a penchant for the real article at prohibitive prices, the leaders of Rank and Fashion have adopted the once despised make-believe; and yet how different they look! In Paris, one of the most chic furs is imitation chinchilla, another is "moufflonne," which I have mentioned before, and plush is also being pressed into service and cut to look like moleskin. It is a curious phase, but is not likely to be a lasting one, as no woman ever deserts real fur for long. Lucky is she who has relations serving in South Russia, from whence one hears wonderful tales of beautiful skins that are to be had in exchange for a tin of bully beef—or some other war-time luxury!

Walking skirts are shorter than ever on the other side of the Channel, but it is doubtful whether this extreme will become so popular over here, as Englishwomen are usually rather too tall for the right effect. However, they are still cut well above the ankles—a great boon in muddy wintry weather.

Many dance frocks are very reminiscent of the 1850 period with their almost crinoline effects. Perhaps the skirts are more "barrel" in shape than those of our grandmothers, and the bodices, or rather the apologies for bodices, are not so pulled in at the waist, and are held up by narrow straps instead of the very small fichu or tiny puff sleeves that fell right off the shoulder in those days. Neither do we wear mittens, though I have no doubt they will be launched before long by some enterprising dressmaker. They would be the greatest boon to the dancing girl, and would carry out the period delightfully. The skirt of tulle befrilled from waist to hem with an elusive flower tucked in here and there is another delicious old-world fancy. One of these frocks has been carried out in filmy palest blue tulle, each flounce being about twelve to fourteen inches in width, and half concealing an occasional small, faded, pinky-mauve chrysanthemum that seemed to have been blown there by a puff of autumn wind. A large, wide, pinky-mauve sash of bright ciré satin lined with rich Burmese blue was tied in a huge knot at one side. The top of the bodice consisted of a small dainty fichu of fine creamy lace, caught in front with a knot of chrysanthemums, and the under bodice was of net and lace threaded through with blue satin. The shoes and stockings were palest mauve, and a coronet of blue ribbon and mauve flowers was worn round the forehead.

A pretty conceit from Paris is the single string of pearls on a diamond clasp worn above the elbow.

Tea-gowns and dinner dresses often reach the ground and trail just a little in a very graceful fashion. Some of these are carried out in gorgeous colourings. Egyptian scarab and glorious Eastern butterflies have inspired some of our foremost designers. Gold and silver is still used a great deal, and velvet has come into its own once more.

The very dècolletté frock back and front—but chiefly back—is seen about far too much to please anyone with the true artistic sense. One wonders why so many women do not realize the wonderful fascinations of delicately veiled charms against the crude realities that are paraded before us at theatres and restaurants nowadays. After all, subtlety of expression is the highest art, and it is not from a sense of British prudery but from a craving for beauty that one cannot uphold the bareback brigade. Madame Pavlova or Maud Allen were never so beautiful or so alluring as when they were draped in illusive chiffons which hid merely to reveal—— "And that's that," as the small girl in *Punch* said to her daddy.

Home-made Beauty Helps and Money-saving Recipes.

BY MIMOSA.

It is quite impossible for me to give advice in these columns regarding the merits of various preparations on the market. In general, my advice to women who wish to retain, or regain, their youthful appearance is to avoid the many unreliable cheap made-up preparations. Nature provides many simple "beautifiers" and the best results are obtained from their use. You must not be disappointed if you experience a little trouble in obtaining some of the ingredients mentioned below. They can all be obtained, however, from any reliable chemist, and even if he does not happen to have them in stock he will gladly obtain them for you at a few hours' notice, if you insist—and you should insist. The smart, dainty woman of to-day likes to know what she is using.

Sure Way of Permanently Removing Superfluous Hairs.

The usual hair removers on the market I have found not at all satisfactory. I recommend the following preparation. It is really wonderful in its action, destroying hairs completely in a few moments. Many women have merely a down on the arms and face and imagine they do not need a hair remover. They hardly realize what a wonderful difference there would be in their appearance if this down, even light as it may be, were removed. Get at any good chemist an ounce of pure powered pheminol. Mix a little of it into a paste with water and apply to the hair growths. Wash off after two minutes and the hairs will have entirely disappeared. A little non-greasy face cream can then be applied with advantage.

Powder Not Necessary.

Few women know that it is possible to give the complexion a delightfully smooth, velvety appearance in a few moments by the application of ordinary cleminite. If you have no cleminite in the house get about an ounce from your chemist and dissolve it in four tablespoonfuls of cold water. This lotion applied to the face, neck, or arms, with the finger tips, immediately gives that peach-like bloom so much admired; powder is not necessary, and the result lasts all day long. For an evening in a hot ball-room this recipe is unrivalled. You will not get that greasy, shiny look so often seen after a little exertion.

Natural Wavy Hair.

Your hair will regain its rich lustre, and fluffy appearance, if cleansed occasionally with a mild shampoo. The very best thing I know of for this purpose is plain stallax, a teaspoonful of which dissolved in a cup of hot water is sufficient for the thickest growth of hair. Pure stallax, however, seems rather expensive as it is only sold in the original packages which cost half-a-crown. This quantity, however, is sufficient for twenty-five or thirty shampoos, so it really is most economical in the long run. Dry, irritating or profusely oily scalps are soon put in a healthy condition, and dull, brittle hair grows bright and even in colour, and will be ever so soft and fluffy.

Hair Culture.

There is no excuse for falling hair; no excuse for thin, sick hair, or bald spots. No beauty of features can make up for a distressing lack of hair growth, and the formula which I purpose giving you will positively force the hair to grow. Mix about an ounce of boranium in ½-pint of bay rum, shake the bottle well and allow it to stand for half-an-hour, then add ¼-pint of fresh cold water and strain. Rub well into the scalp, and in two weeks' time look for the new growth; you will not require a microscope to see it.

To Renew Complexions without Cosmetics.

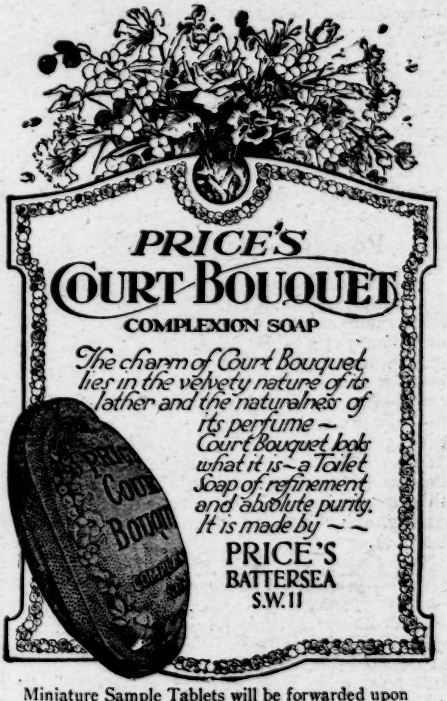
If the excessive user of cosmetics only knew the impression her artificiality really makes upon others, she would quickly seek the means of gaining a natural complexion. Let her acquire the mercolised wax habit, discarding make-up entirely, and she will soon have the kind of complexion that women envy and men admire. It is so easy to get a little mercolised wax from the chemist and use it nightly like cold cream, washing it off in the morning. Gradually the lifeless, soiled outer cuticle peels off in tiny invisible flakes, and in a week or so you have a brand new complexion, clear, soft, velvety, and of girlish colour and texture. The treatment is so simple, harmless, and marvellously effective, the wonder is that every woman whose skin is withered and discoloured has not already adopted it.

WHEN REVUES STARTED

In 1913 Madame Rasimi brought over her charming French Revue "J'adore Ca," which had a wonderful run at the Middlesex. This was the commencement of Revues in this country, and Miss Nora Creina's delightful performance as the Golden Butterfly lingers in one's memory. I have seen this talented and versatile young actress dancing in Paris on various occasions, and was agreeably surprised to find her in the revival of "Hullo America" at the Kennington Theatre, where it remains for the next three weeks. Miss Creina is as vivacious as ever, and appears in three different characters—as an American belle, a French artiste, and a Yorkshire lassie—but owing to a sprained ankle her dances have had to be cut for the present.

CHARACTER IN HAND-WRITING

The celebrated French writer, Buffon, is responsible for the saying "Le style c'est l'homme" (Style is the man himself). And he might have added, Style is the woman herself. What is it? Surely the reflection of our personality, seen in many ways—in look, in tone, in gesture, in attire. Handwriting, someone suggests. Yes, that too. Style, character, individuality—call it what you will—*does* come out in handwriting. Those of us who are fortunate enough to write a characteristic hand are to be congratulated. A good deal depends on the kind of nib. Those up-to-date folks who write with a Waterman's Ideal Fountain Pen are fortunate, because each of them can have a nib to suit his hand. There are Broad, Stub, Medium, and Fine points, so that any type of writing is provided for. Another most agreeable feature about the Waterman's Ideal is that the flow of ink starts immediately the nib touches the paper. Yet another attraction is the appearance of the Pen—there is a style about it that appeals to the discriminating man or woman. It is designed on handsome lines—good but not gaudy. To judge by the number of Waterman's Ideal Fountain Pens that are used by prominent members of London Society, it would seem that this wonderful writing instrument has indeed become almost an essential in the social circles of the Metropolis. The reason of this is not far to see—it is due to the remarkable ingenuity displayed in perfecting the product. There are three distinct types. One, the "Self-filling," has a device by which the reservoir may be replenished in a few seconds; another, the "Safety," is provided with a cap that enables the pen to be carried in any position without fear of leakage (a great favourite this with ladies, and with travellers, golfers, motorists, and sportsmen). The third is the original and world-famous "Regular" type with its large ink supply. This type may also be had with the "Security Cap." Each of these types is available in handsome gold and silver mountings suitable for presentation. Practically all high-class Stationers and Jewellers stock these famous Pens, but for those readers who desire it an illustrated list may be had gratis by writing to Messrs. L. G. Sloan, Ltd., The Pen Corner, Kingsway, London, W.C. 2.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There are some who are prejudiced against the idea of receiving advice about racing—but why? If you know a friend in the City—one who is in intimate touch with the right people—do you not simply yearn to ask him to tell you what he knows? Of course you do, and just as the ordinary speculator or investor needs sound advice to guide him in his operations, so does he (or she) who takes a speculative interest in racing.

And why not have it? If you want advice on law, you go to a man of legal experience to get it; if you want advice on your health, you go to an expert for it, so why not seek the advice of an expert at racing? I have owned many winners, and I get to know the business intended by a good many stables, which knowledge, combined with experience and good judgment, and the fact that I spare no outlay and no trouble which will bring WINNERS, necessarily results in profit, both to myself and to those who patronise me.

Now, the first thing to remember is this —It is of no use backing horses every day just for the sake of having a bet The only sure way to success is to *wait*, to wait until something really reliable comes along, and that is my part of the business, and I observe it strictly. I cannot and *will not* wire every day.

Another thing is, to unalterably confine your operations to *one horse*, and never more under any circumstances whatever. Then, by following these occasional items of genuine information, strictly one horse, you can absolutely rely on beating your bookmaker, and I want you to accept my help, for I know that I can win money for you regularly.

If you are attending any meeting, or if you are staying at home and desire to take a speculative interest in any race-meetings, you cannot do better than patronise me, for I have the best men on the Turf working for me, I employ men who attend every meeting and travel the training quarters, ever on the search for winners, and I am confident that the profit of the season 1919 will surpass even that of past years. I lay no claim to infallibility, but I DO claim experience and judgment, which MUST be beneficial to my followers.

I supply the information each day that I advise anything to be done, my terms being the odds to two sovereigns each winner. Add £2 to your stake every time, and the profit of that £2 (as paid to you by your bookmaker) is what you pay me for each win, as my fee for the advice. Don't run away with the idea that the information is dear, for it is nothing of the sort. It is not what you pay for WINS that counts against you, but what you pay your bookmaker for losers, and you will win oftener than you will lose if you follow me. Moreover, the information will really cost you very little, if you add my fee to your own stake every time, as the only out-of-pocket cost to you is when the information loses, which is not often.

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